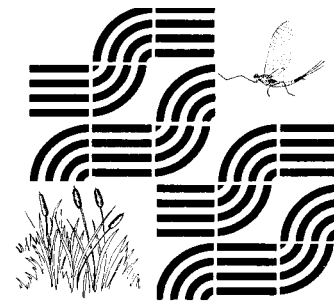


GEORGIA

Adopt-A-Stream

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Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division

Happy 20th Birthday Georgia Adopt-A-Stream!

By Harold Harbert, EPD Outreach Program Manager

It's hard to believe that Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is 20 years old. Or is it actually older? The birth of volunteer monitoring in Georgia is at best a little hazy, with many key figures contributing a little something to its creation, and with citizens, private and government agencies all playing a role.

By and large though, the initiation of the Adopt-A-Stream program began with Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) hire of Laurie Hawks in 1992. The list of accomplishments for the early program is impressive: formation of the advisory board, creation of the quality assurance project plan, the visual, chemical and biological manuals and corresponding QA/QC workshops, the train-the-trainer program, an annual conference, a bi-monthly newsletter, a promotional video for the program and the Adopt-A-Stream logo.

Since the program's inception, many state coordinators have contributed tremendously to our success, each adding a little something to strengthen and expand volunteer monitoring in Georgia. And, each has recognized a common theme: Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is only as strong as our partners.

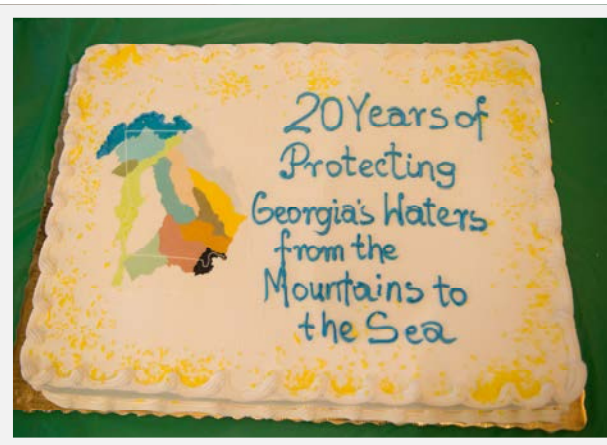
Partners of the program have come in many shapes and forms, but they all share a common passion for protecting our most valuable resource: water. Working for county or city governments, watershed organizations, not-for-profit groups or for themselves, local leaders not only conduct water monitoring workshops, they play an important role in guiding the development of the statewide program. These partners help with creating new monitoring methods, updating resources, assisting with our conference and most importantly, being a resource for citizens. Simply put, we could not be successful without their support.

If the state and local leaders are proud of their accomplishments, it can only be due to the incredible support Georgia citizens have provided. Just look at the numbers: in the past year volunteers monitored 487 sites, recording 16,633 data points. Over the last 20 years, more than 18,000 volunteers have participated in the monitoring program, conducting 20,248 monitoring events at 1,315 sites, totaling 107,715 data points. In monetary terms, the Independent Sector estimates the value of Georgia volunteers to be in excess of 3.5 million dollars.

While the monitoring numbers are impressive, the true value of the program may best be quantified in the number of citizens engaged in watershed protection activities, helping to identify sewage leaks, erosion issues and stormwater runoff impacts. Through this process of engagement, citizens become invested in the health of their watershed.

Twenty years ago, Georgia EPD took a chance on starting a program that engaged citizens in learning about, monitoring and protecting our watersheds. It was a pretty radical idea at the time, and still is when you consider that Georgia might be the only state in the nation with a volunteer monitoring program housed in the state's regulatory agency.

For EPD, housing the Adopt-A-Stream program makes sense; Education and outreach are components of the regulatory permitting process, thus there is a logical connection between citizen monitoring and EPD. Those early pioneers of Georgia's volunteer water monitoring program may not have been fully aware of what they were creating, but their efforts sowed the seed for a very successful program, on many different levels. *(Continued on the last page.)*



Georgia Adopt-A-Highway 1993

1980's 1993

Stream Watch

Trout Unlimited developed a procedure for observing and reporting water quality in Georgia and especially sediment problems. They called it 'stream watch.'

GA AAS Hires First State Coordinator Laurie Hawks

Goals established, 300 volunteers active, 9 community programs initiated, and first rough drafts of manuals!



Late 1980's

Beginning ideas of a state 'stream watch' program drifted through the halls of EPD=seed planted!

1994

First AAS Volunteer Awards Given

First AAS Conference Held at Kennesaw



AAS Advisory Board Formed

1997

Freshwater Wetland Monitoring Program & Manual Created

1970's

EPD Co-op Partnership with Trout Unlimited

Began to sample streams in North Georgia

Other local citizen Monitoring programs emerge in Georgia

1991-1993

Eve Brantley (formerly Funderburk) Joins the Team as a State Coordinator

Teacher's Guide Created & First Newsletter Published

2000

1990

Gwinnett County Forms their Own AAS Program



Ted Mikalsen

1996

First Manuals are Official!
Biological & Chemical Getting Started Visual

1998

Michele Drostin (formerly Harold Harbert) Joins the Team as a State Coordinator

1995

► Ted Mikalsen of EPD Water Protection Branch submits a grant proposal for a state 'stream watch' program which gets approved!

► EPD contracts with ATL Regional Planning Commission to guide this effort including hiring a state coordinator, creating a program based on elements of a statewide 'stream watch' program, GA Clean and Beautiful, Adopt-A-Highway, and Project WILD programs, as well as partnering with local governments and organizations.

► EPD applies for another grant to implement these ideas and was awarded!



Michele & Harold Significant Number of Community Coordinators

Adopt-A-Stream History

2003-2013



2001
Coastal Adopt-A-Wetland Program is Born!



2006

5,000
Volunteers Reached!

Sally Mason
Hired as
State
Coordinator

2007

300 &
AAS
GROUPS!

\$1,000,000
Of In-kind Service to
the State of Georgia
by AAS Volunteer
Monitoring &
Outreach Efforts

2009

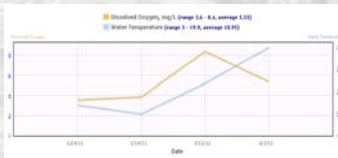
50,000
Data Points
Reached!

Allison Hughes
Returns for
Round Two!



Tara Muenz Joins as
State Coordinator

Database & Website
Merge



2013

100,000
Data Points
Reached!

Over 70 Local
AAS Programs &
Trainers Active

29,000+
Monitoring
Certifications

More Great
Programmatic
Updates to
Come!

More Manuals!
Watershed
Visual (revised)



**Early Droszcz) &
Become
Trainers**



Recently Expanded the
Trainers in the Program

AAS Incorporates
Amphibian
Monitoring 

Educator's Guide
Created (revised
teacher's guide)

Allison Hughes
Joins AAS as
State
Coordinator

2005

Bacterial Monitoring
Manual Created

Kim Morris-Zarneke
Hired as State
Coordinator

2002

800
SITES
ADOPTED!

10,000
Volunteers
Reached!

\$2,000,000
Of In-kind Service
to the State of GA

New AAS Online
Database
Created

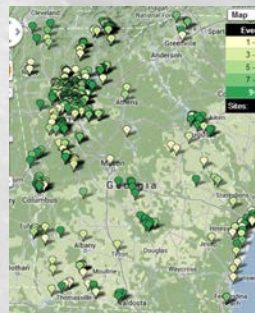
500
SITES
ADOPTED!

2008



GO BLUE!
E-newsletter Created

2010



Thank you
volunteers &
partners, we
are so grateful
for your
service to
Georgia's
waterways!

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:

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www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org

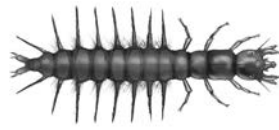
GO BLUE in 2013 by signing up for our e-newsletter & receive all the same news while saving our natural resources.
Sign up by emailing us at aas@gaepd.org.



Dragonfly



Riffle Beetle



Dobsonfly



Stonefly



Net Spinning Caddisfly

Happy 20th Birthday Georgia Adopt-A-Stream! Cont'd

As we look back at all those who contributed to the stream monitoring program in Georgia, it's important to understand the key role they all played in creating a foundation for our success. In the last few years, Georgia's volunteer monitoring program has experienced so much expansion, seemingly growing in leaps and bounds every year. With continued strong support from the state and federal government, our outstanding local community partners, and of course, the hard work of our dedicated volunteers, there's every reason to believe that the best of volunteer monitoring in Georgia has only just begun. **Keep up the good work and thank you for your help in making us who we are today!**



Georgia Adopt-A-Stream's State Coordinators Over the Years

Please visit our calendar on www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org for upcoming monitoring workshops and Adopt-A-Stream events.