

GEORGIA

Adopt-A-Stream

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Local 319 Getting Involved with AAS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards a Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to fund projects based on Georgia's Nonpoint Source Management Program. Funds are competitively distributed to public or planning agencies that are developing or implementing existing Watershed Management Plans (WMP) that incorporate EPA's Nine Elements for Watershed Planning. WMPs identify water quality improvement projects that will result in a reduction in pollutant loads and have measurable improvements in water quality.

One element features an education component, which Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) can provide to support grant recipients to reinvent the wheel in developing outreach programs. Another element is data assessment in which AAS methods are used for targeted monitoring to identify "hot spots" of water quality issues within the watershed. These identified high priority areas become the focus of implementation and is critical to the development of a WMP. Finally, AAS methods are used to monitor water quality changes as improvement projects are implemented. The following pages give a few examples of how groups located in different areas of the state are getting involved with AAS to fulfill their grant outreach objectives and collect water quality data.

Limestone Valley Resource Conservation & Development Council (Northwest GA)

Adopt-A-Stream helps us engage local individuals in monitoring streams in their communities. From our perspective, the monitoring data is helpful for assessing water quality issues, but the AAS program as well as Rivers Alive and other outreach activities also helps us with our Clean Water Act 319 grants by providing volunteer hours to help us reach our outreach targets. Most importantly, it helps us make real connections within our communities and gives a small, relatively unknown group like us an opportunity for some press to develop name recognition in our communities, as well as provides us marketing opportunities to advertise the potential for clean water projects.

Although the program (as well as Rivers Alive and other outreach activities) does a lot to help us in our endeavors, it may actually be more important to the communities it serves. It really allows us to educate locals (often youths) and get them learning and actually applying some science all while connecting them with an important resource in their communities. Without Adopt-A-Stream and other outreach programs, many of these youths would never experience their local stream in any way except

to drive over it on a bridge. Instead, they learn that streams in their own backyard, as well as the critters within them, are both fascinating and important. In addition, these youths see that folks can make a career out of conservation, which is very important for kids that have never been exposed to that type of diversity in their own lives. I can't help but believe these kids approach their communities with a different and more conservation-oriented mindset after experiencing the program, all while connecting science class with actual "on-the-ground" application and potential career opportunities.

- Daniel Huser, Limestone Valley RC&D Council
www.limestonevalley.org



Continued on next page.

Local 319 Projects Partnering with AAS...(continued)

River Valley Regional Commission (West central GA)

The River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), one of twelve Regional Commissions within the state, serves 16 counties in west central Georgia. Among many other services, the RC provides its region with environmental planning and monitoring. RVRC's Environmental Planning Department, staffed by Lance Renfrow and Cassie Myers, has recently received 319(h) funds and is currently carrying out two grants within the region. The first, a two-year project located in Dooly County, focuses on the Pennahatchee Creek watershed. Based on the watershed's location and knowledge of the local habitat, feral hogs were deduced to be a major contributor of the fecal contamination noted by EPD. Use of the AAS bacterial monitoring technique has helped pinpoint locations of the most significant impairment and aided in



the determination of Best Management Practice (BMP) installation locations. Following the installment of BMPs and a year long feral hog harvesting period, the waters will again be tested using AAS protocols, and hopefully, a dramatic reduction in levels of *e. coli* will have been attained. The second grant, a twenty-one month long project focusing on the watershed of Pataula Creek, covers land in Stewart, Randolph, Quitman, and Clay Counties. The creek and its tributaries will be monitored using both AAS bacterial and biological monitoring techniques; in doing so, Renfrow and Myers will attempt to determine the most noteworthy sources and locations of sediment and *e. coli* impairment. Following the conclusion of monitoring, RVRC will submit a WMP to EPD to address the data collected. In addition to monitoring, RVRC staff will also hold AAS workshops for local officials and citizens within the region in hopes of long-term water quality monitoring.

- Cassie Myers, River Valley Regional Commission
www.rivervalleyrc.org

Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (Northeast GA)

A Georgia 319 grant was awarded to the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition in 2012 to improve the water rating of Lake Chatuge. Over a ten year period, Lake Chatuge's water quality rating steadily decreased as a result of high nutrient runoff from development, agriculture, and old or failing septic systems. The TVA and the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition discovered, through their monitoring of the lake and tributary waters this nutrient runoff to be the cause of the algal blooms and lowered ecological ratings. Continued monitoring could not be possible without the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program. We have one employee assigned to the entire Lake Chatuge watershed, so with the help of nine QA/QC certified volunteers, all 14 sites are routinely monitored for chemical and bacterial parameters monthly.

The Adopt-A-Stream website is an easy to use interface. Each volunteer has an account on the website and simply inputs results for their water monitoring site. The Watershed Coalition can access this information quickly. The website displays graphs and data onsite as well and allows users to download the data into an excel

spreadsheet. This organization has helped the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition maintain vital data collection throughout the implementation of a Georgia section 319 Grant for nonpoint source pollution; as well, volunteer monitoring hours provide matching funds for the grant administration. Data will be used to find baseline water quality parameters and monitor any change that occur over time. Quality data is insured as well, thanks to rigorous training by qualified individuals and annual recertification for volunteers.

- Sara Posey, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition
www.hrwc.net



Help us Celebrate your Success!

Submit a Nomination for the 2013 AAS Awards

Thank you volunteers, trainers and community coordinators for all your dedication and hard work to protect the health of your local waterways. We wish that we could award all of you, and encourage you to continue letting us know about your success stories! Please consider nominating your group or an individual who deserves to be honored. Our award categories are as diverse as our volunteers. Please refer to the previous newsletter or our website for more information on award descriptions.

Submissions are due by Jan 27th!

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

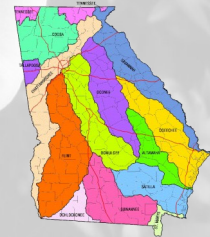
Volunteer of the Year
Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed Effort
Adopt-A-Stream in Action
Outstanding Outreach and Partnership
Adopt-A-Stream Multimedia Award
Excellence in Data Collection
Nymph Award

WATERSHED AWARDS*

These awards recognize local, public utilities, government agencies, regional commissions, nonprofits, and watershed organizations that have excelled in implementing the Adopt-A-Stream goals.

TRAINER AWARDS*

New Trainer and Trainer of the Year



More information on these can be found at www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org

*contact the State office to obtain an application

Don't Forget to Enter your Data ASAP!

We encourage volunteers to promptly enter their data into the Adopt-A-Stream database. This helps the State Office and our Local Coordinators in the following ways:

Problem Detection

Prompt entry enables us to act quickly when a problem is detected. If there is a time lapse between the date of collection and the date of entry, we may not be able to determine the cause of the impairment and act accordingly.

QA/QC

All data entered into the Adopt-A-Stream database is reviewed by our staff. It is evaluated based on the normal range for each parameter and is flagged if the data falls outside these limits. If outliers are present, we communicate with the monitoring group to verify if the data is accurate and determine if further testing is needed.

Reporting

Data collected by our volunteers is very important for reporting purposes. Data is used in reports to local, state and federal governments to show the value of volunteer monitoring. Many of these reports are submitted on a monthly basis, so prompt data entry is essential. Aside from the water quality data, numbers such as time spent monitoring and number of volunteers at each monitoring event are used in these reports.



Have Photos? Do Share!

Do you have photos from your monitoring events? Got a photo of your favorite waterway? Please share them with the Adopt-A-Stream community by posting them to the AAS facebook page.

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
404.675.6240
www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org

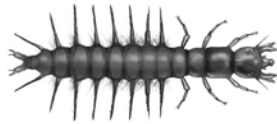
GO BLUE in 2013 by signing up for our e-newsletter & receive all the same news while saving our natural resources. Sign up by emailing us at aas@gaepd.org.



Dragonfly



Riffle Beetle



Dobsonfly



Stonefly



Net Spinning Caddisfly

Important Program Updates Coming Soon

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is rolling out updates and will be going live with these in the new year. These long awaited changes will feature basic visual observations for all types of monitoring and will also include updated water chemistry protocols such as duplicate precision rules for DO and pH readings! AAS Trainers are ready to start reeling out the changes, so stay posted!



Tara, Harold and Anne are hard at work and ready to rock and roll out the changes!

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