

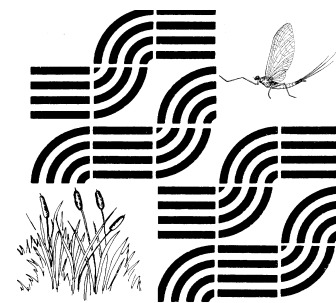
# GEORGIA

# Adopt-A-Stream

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Department of Natural Resources  
Environmental Protection Division

## Paddle Georgia 2009: 92 miles, 7 days, 120 sampling sites, 7 trainers, 40 certifications, and one great time!



The 2009 Paddle Georgia (PG) event, sponsored by Georgia River Network, was a very busy time for all including the Adopt-A-Stream staff. For first timers Tara Muenz, AAS State Coordinator, and Anne Stahley, Outreach Unit Program Assistant, the trip was more than we could have ever imagined and offered unending experiential learning and opportunities to meet other river lovers and citizens concerned about water resources.

The paddle took place from June 22nd through the 28th along gorgeous stretches of the Coosawattee and Oostanaula Rivers, beginning in Ellijay to our last take out at Rome's Heritage Park. We flowed with the rivers through the Upper Coosa Watershed and two geologic provinces, the Blue Ridge and Ridge and Valley.

The AAS staff members began preparing in January, recruiting trainers to help us with our PG workshops and monitoring along the 92-mile trip. We ended up with a dedicated and knowledgeable team including Ellijay local Renee Gracon, Rome's infamous Eric Lindbergh, and one of Hall county's finest, Scarlett Fuller. These trainers not only collected water quality samples, but helped to certify over forty PG participants in AAS chemical and bacterial monitoring methods.

Additional assistance with our water quality monitoring came from Outreach Unit Manager Harold Harbert, and AAS board members Steve Blackburn (and his 13 year

old niece Jessica) and Bob Bourne. They endured long days on the water sampling and long nights of sample processing. Little did they know what this experience would entail when they signed up!

### Reality of the Rivers

Both the Coosawattee and Oostanaula Rivers are incredible ecosystems with diverse assemblages of mussel and fish species, many listed as federally protected. As is the reality of many rivers today, they also face threats to survive, and certain stretches are on the 305(b)/303(d) list for impairments to their health (refer to <http://gaepd.org/Documents/305b.html> for more information). Notably, portions of the Oostanaula River and many of its tributaries are listed as not supporting its designated uses for fishing and drinking because of PCB contamination in fish and *fecal coliform* bacteria.

During the paddling journey we sampled 120 mainstem and tributary sites for selected water quality parameters including pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, temperature, *E. coli*, phosphate, ammonia and nitrate. Often we were asked by paddlers, "can I swim here," and "what's the water quality today?" Here we present a few of the highlights in water quality data and the rest can now be found online! New and exciting to the AAS database is the ability to display and view data that has been taken on the watershed level.

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**To view the 2009 Paddle Georgia data:**

1. Go to the AAS website
2. Click on 'Data Views'
3. Click on either 'Paddle Georgia 2009 Maps' or 'Paddle Georgia 2009 Data'

**Data Highlight: Tributaries vs. Mainstem**

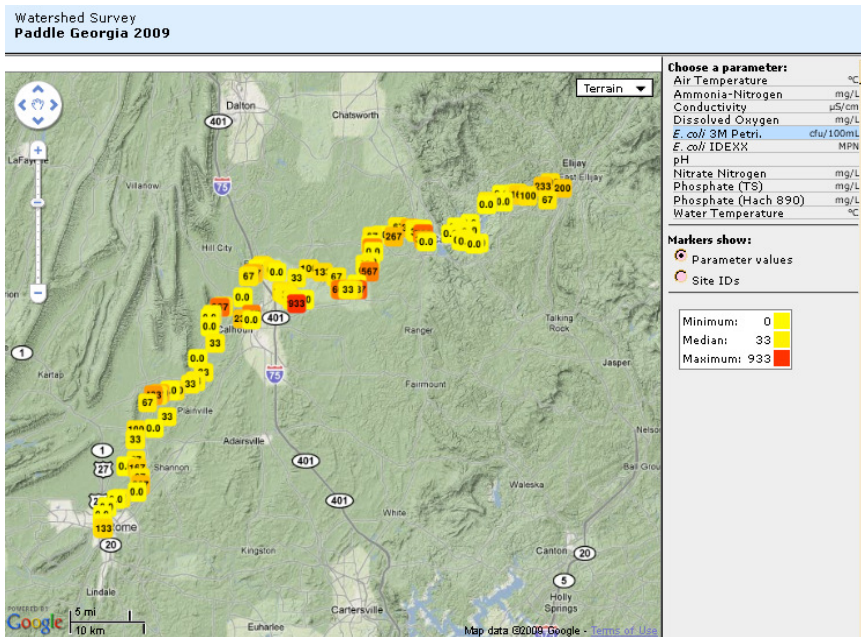
An interesting trend we noticed with our 2009 PG data was the difference in water quality between the tributaries that feed the rivers and the mainstem sites themselves. At the beginning of the trip along the Coosawattee River, tributaries appeared more stable along their banks and *E. coli* bacteria levels were low (ranging from 0-100 cfu/100mL).

Further downstream, into the Ridge and Valley province and on the Oostanaula River, tributaries seemed to take a hit from development and farming practices. This is where the tributaries showed their stress with higher levels of conductivity (40-370 µS/cm) and *E. coli* (tributaries ranging from 33-933 cfu/100mL).

**Call For Volunteers**

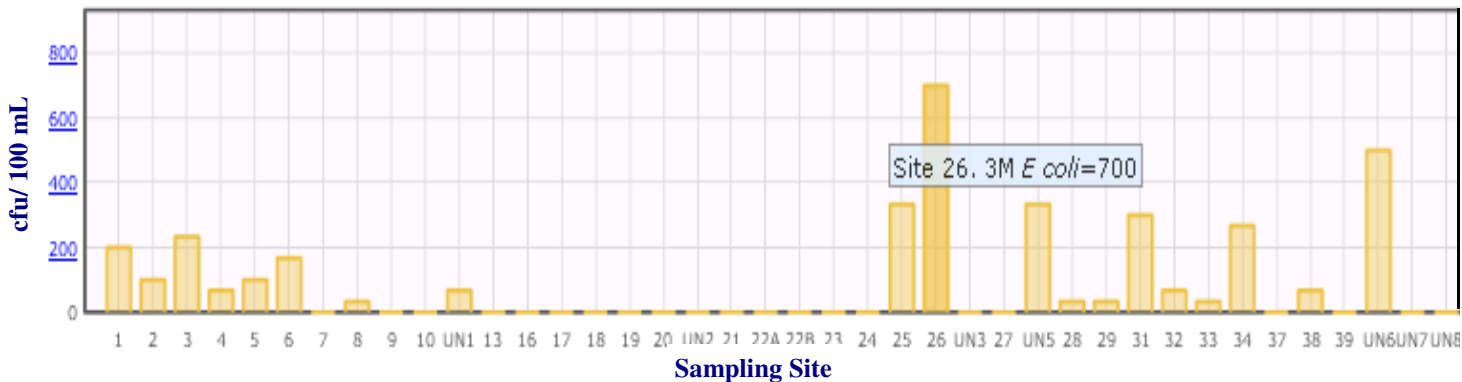
Our sampling throughout the week of Paddle Georgia was only a snapshot of the water quality and health of these rivers, scratching the surface of what was occurring. To develop baseline data for the Coosawattee and Oostanaula Rivers, we are looking for local volunteers to monitor sites of concern. If you are interested in adopting one of our Paddle Georgia monitoring sites to help us gather much needed data, please contact us for more information.

**See you at Paddle Georgia 2010 on the Savannah and Broad Rivers!**



*A longitudinal view of the sites sampled on PG 2009 (E. coli is shown and is color coded for measured levels when viewed online).*

**3M Petrifilm *E. coli* levels, Paddle Georgia 2009**



Using the online map and data display views, each parameter sampled is presented along with the range of the data (minimum, median, maximum) and a table with the measurements and corresponding graphs. Here we show a subset of *E. coli* levels sampled during PG 2009.

# 2009 Adopt-A-Stream Volunteer Awards

Adopt-A-Stream's annual volunteer awards are just around the corner, and we're looking for nominations! You can nominate yourself or others for any one of the seven categories listed below, or submit a general nomination to be considered for all categories. Nominations should include a short description of how the volunteer(s) embodied the four goals of Adopt-A-Stream and excelled in their volunteerism and water protection over the last year. Supporting materials are also accepted. **Deadline: January 5, 2010.**

\*Awards will be given at our volunteer conference called 'The Confluence' to be held at Stone Mountain on Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

## **VOLUNTEER AWARDS:**

### **Volunteer of the Year**

This goes to the individual who has gone beyond the call of duty to protect Georgia's waterways and to support the Adopt-A-Stream mission, giving their time and energy to improve our waterways.

### **Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed Effort**

Protection of our streams starts with the protection of our watersheds. Help us recognize the group that has accomplished the most to blur political boundaries and confront local issues by working in the watershed.

### **Red Flag Award**

Perseverance, environmental awareness, a keen understanding of water policy, and a desire to act when a problem is detected are the traits we are looking for in our Red Flag Award.

### **Outstanding Outreach and Partnership**

The first step in conservation is awareness. And awareness only happens through effective outreach efforts and partnerships. Nominate a group or person that has demonstrated skill in effectively organizing and educating others.

### **Adopt-A-Stream in Action**

Reaching out to local communities about environmental issues can be done in a multitude of ways. This award goes to the group who has gone above and beyond by utilizing non-traditional formats (multimedia, art, etc.) to raise awareness.

### **Excellence in Data Collection**

Volunteer monitoring data can make a difference, but only if it's collected consistently and under a QA/QC plan. Nominate an individual or group who has consistently collected quality data.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS:**

### **Watershed Award**

This award recognizes local public utilities, RDC's and government agencies that have exceeded standards in implementing the four Adopt-A-Stream goals. Contact Adopt-A-Stream for more information and an application.

*Award nominations are accepted through the website: [www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org](http://www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org). You can also e-mail entries to [tara.muenz@gaeprd.org](mailto:tara.muenz@gaeprd.org), or send them to:*

**Georgia Adopt-A-Stream  
Environmental Protection Division  
4220 International Pkwy. Suite 101  
Atlanta, GA 30354  
404-675-6240**

## Time to update your contact information!

We would like to contact the AAS community and keep you informed of upcoming workshops, conferences, and handy information. Please go online and **update your email and physical mailing address** as soon as you can!

Here's the step-by-step process:

1. Go to [www.georgiaadoptastream.org](http://www.georgiaadoptastream.org)
2. Click on 'Sign in' and use your database email address and password
3. Once logged in, click on 'People,' and search for your name
4. Click on 'Edit,' update your information and then click 'Save.'

\*Or, you can contact us at the state office and we will update this for you!

Please visit our calendar of events at [www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org](http://www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org) for upcoming monitoring workshops and Adopt-A-Stream events.

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:

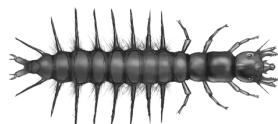
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Dragonfly



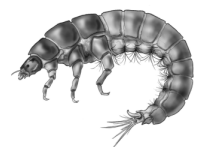
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