

## **Georgia Adopt-A-Stream**

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) is a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program. AAS is housed in the NonPoint Source Program, Watershed Protection Branch of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and is funded by a United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Section 319(h) Grant. Georgia Adopt-A-Stream encourages individuals and communities to monitor and/or improve sections of streams, wetlands, lakes or estuaries. Manuals, training and technical support are provided through Georgia EPD and more than 60 established Community organizers. Community programs organize monitoring groups in their watershed, county or city. These local programs are funded by counties, cities and nonprofit organizations and use the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream model, manuals and workshops to promote nonpoint source pollution education and data collection in their area.

The goals of Georgia Adopt-A-Stream are easy to remember by using the acronym “**ADOPT**”.

**A**wareness: Increase public awareness of the State’s nonpoint source pollution and water quality issues

**D**ata: Collect baseline water quality data

**O**bservations: Encourage volunteers to take observations of their adopted site and surrounding environment

**P**artnerships: Encourage partnerships between citizens and their local government

**T**ools and Training: Provide citizens with the tools and training to evaluate and protect their local waterways

### **Awareness**

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream has been tasked with the goal of increasing public awareness of the State’s nonpoint source pollution and water quality issues. We accomplish this through workshops, outreach materials such as newsletters, manuals and brochures, as well as our annual volunteer conference and by presenting at community events. We encourage our volunteers to also foster this goal by building awareness within their own communities.

### **Data**

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream houses an online clearinghouse for volunteer water quality data for the State of Georgia. This data is publicly accessible on our website at [www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org](http://www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org) and can be viewed at the city, county and watershed level to help citizens better understand the health of their local waterways. Volunteer monitoring data is used to educate the public and help local, state and federal agencies make informed decisions and to identify water quality impairments.

## Observations

Careful observations of our waterways can lead to success in protecting and improving its conditions. In addition to the data found on the datasheets, you may notice other details that are important to record when visiting your adopted site. Stay aware of baseline conditions so if anything changes in future visits, you will be able to tell and can act accordingly.

## Partnerships

Adopt-A-Stream encourages new groups to inform their local government about their activities and to create partnerships with local schools, businesses, watershed organizations and government agencies. These partnerships can enhance your program by providing support for your group through data interpretation, advice on restoration techniques, remediation, sponsorships and volunteer recruitment. If you need help establishing partnerships, we encourage you to contact your local coordinator/trainer or the AAS state office.

## Tools and Training

The Adopt-A-Stream program offers many levels of involvement including training, certification and monitoring. Some of our monitoring programs require the volunteer to obtain Quality Assurance/Quality Control certification (QA/QC), which is accomplished by attending a workshop and passing the QA/QC test. This certification allows the volunteer to enter data into the database. Our non-QA/QC programs offer a training workshop and manuals, but certification is not required. Manuals and support materials are provided for each monitoring type to guide volunteers through the monitoring process. To find out more about different levels of involvement, visit our website: [http://georgiaadoptastream.org/db/aas\\_levels.asp](http://georgiaadoptastream.org/db/aas_levels.asp)

### Adopt-A-Stream Certifications and Monitoring Programs For Freshwater and Coastal Waterways

Watershed Assessments (Y)	Visual Monitoring (Q)
Macroinvertebrate Monitoring (Q)*	Amphibian Monitoring (bi-monthly)
Chemical Monitoring (M)*	Bacterial Monitoring (M)*
Freshwater Wetland Monitoring (Q)	Coastal Monitoring (M)*
Lake Monitoring (M)	Rivers Alive (year round)
Trainer Certification*	

\*=QA/QC programs    M=Monthly Sampling    Q=Quarterly Sampling    Y=Yearly Sampling

Currently, Adopt-A-Stream has over 3,300 active volunteers who monitor 520 sites and our bi-monthly newsletter has over 8,000 subscribers. We invite you to join us to help protect Georgia's water resources.