

# 2013 Activities & Progress Report

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District



# 2013 Board Members

## Elected Officials

Hon. Boyd Austin, Jr. (*District Chair*)  
Mayor, Dallas, Paulding County

Hon. Kasim Reed  
Mayor, City of Atlanta

Hon. Steve Taylor  
Commissioner, Bartow County

Hon. L.B. "Buzz" Ahrens, Jr.  
Chairman, Cherokee County Commission

Hon. Jeff Turner  
Chairman, Clayton County Commission

Hon. Tim Lee  
Chairman, Cobb County Commission

Hon. Bob Blackburn  
Chairman, Coweta County Commission

Hon. Lee May  
Interim CEO, DeKalb County

Hon. Tom Worthan  
Chairman, Douglas County Commission

Hon. Steve Brown  
Chairman, Fayette County Commission

Hon. Pete Amos  
Chairman, Forsyth County Commission

Hon. John Eaves  
Chairman, Fulton County Commission

Hon. Charlotte Nash  
Chairman, Gwinnett County Commission

Hon. Bob Hamrick  
Mayor Pro-Tem, Gainesville, Hall County

Hon. Tommy Smith  
Chairman, Henry County Commission

Hon. Richard Oden  
Chairman, Rockdale County Commission

## Citizen Members

Katie Kirkpatrick (*Vice Chair*), Atlanta

Birdel Jackson (*Secretary/Treasurer*), Atlanta

William Thomas Craig, Covington

Bradley Currey, Jr., Atlanta

Kit Dunlap, Gainesville

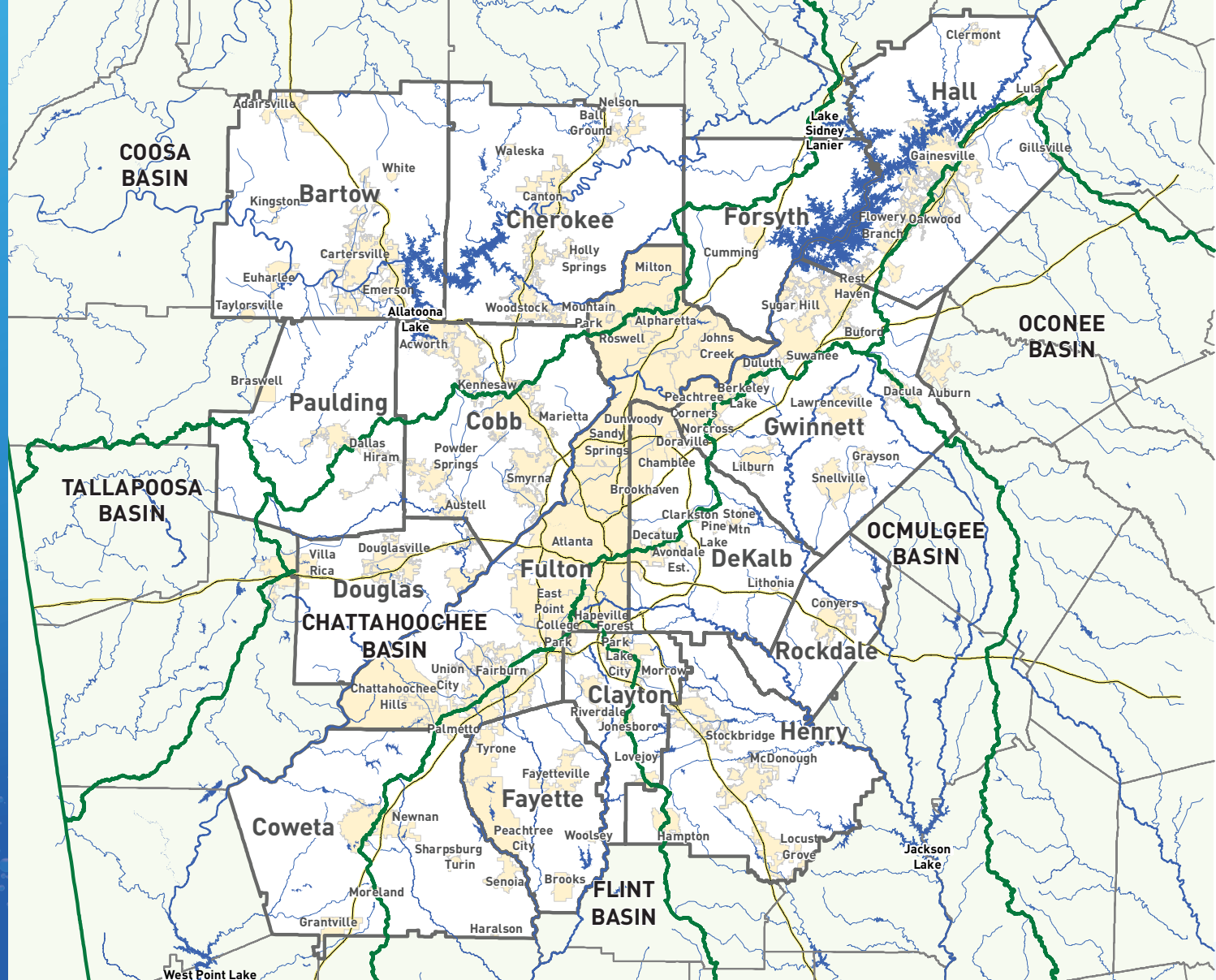
Chuck Huling, Mableton

Reginald Prime, Lilburn

Gerald Pouncey, Jr., Atlanta

Tim Thoms, Fayetteville

Cover photo by Melinda Anderson



## About the Metro Water District

In 2001, the Georgia General Assembly established the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District which created a framework for developing comprehensive plans for water supply and conservation, wastewater and watershed management in the metro Atlanta region. The District adopted the first set of plans in 2003. Since then it has worked in partnership with the state and local governments in the 15-county planning area to implement and strengthen the plans. The next update of the three resource plans is due in 2016, a timeline that is now consistent with the 10 other water planning councils throughout the state.



# Chairman's Message

Over the last decade, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has emerged as a national leader in regional water resources planning. The Metro Water District serves as the comprehensive planning agency for water supply and conservation, wastewater and watershed management for the 15-county metro Atlanta area. With more than 100 local jurisdictions and utilities joining together to implement the provisions of the plans, the District's comprehensive approach to water resources planning makes it one of the most effective planning efforts in the country.

This best-in-class planning is made possible by the hard work of more than 400 stakeholders involved in the process. Our Governing Board, Technical Coordinating Committee, Basin Advisory Councils and staff advise and assess plan elements, review best practices and create policy. The three Metro Water District plans are backed by many years of knowledge and experience, and the plan provisions are enforced by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

2013 has been a busy year for the District, as this Annual Activities and Progress Report shows. With the hard work of staff, the District has provided empirical data showing that we are excellent stewards of our water resources and maintain a high rate of returns to the system. The District has helped reduce overall water demand since 2000 by 10 percent, even though population has increased by more than one million. Per capita water use continues to go down. One reason for this is that there has been consistent and wide-spread implementation of 19 conservation measures across the District. Specifically in 2013, utilities have become more aggressive in finding and fixing system leaks, one of the provisions addressed in the Water Supply and Conservation Plan.

Improvements in wastewater management over the past year reduced the number of spills reaching waters of the state. The percentage of documented spills traced to grease-related clogs went down by six percent. Local utilities have distributed nearly 200,000 fats, oils and grease (F.O.G.) prevention door hangers to multifamily residents since 2011. Clearly they are working!

The District's two ongoing education campaigns received a much-needed boost in attention and funding in 2013 and remain a vital piece of the District's outreach and awareness efforts. New radio and television spots promote the My Drop Counts water conservation campaign, focusing on the wise use of water. The number of pledges on [www.mydropcounts.org](http://www.mydropcounts.org) almost doubled in the past year. Planned billboards for the Clean Water Campaign will soon greet commuters with tips on how to prevent stormwater pollution, and a new and improved website, [www.cleanwatercampaign.com](http://www.cleanwatercampaign.com), is an excellent resource for metro area residents of all ages to learn about watershed protection.

Thank you for taking the time to review our 2013 Annual Activities and Progress Report and learning what the Metro Water District does to encourage the responsible use of our shared water resources. We appreciate all the stakeholders who have shaped the District as it is today. We rely on the involvement of each of these groups for the District to run efficiently and effectively. We also appreciate the efforts of metro Atlanta residents who voluntarily participate in water conservation practices and stormwater pollution prevention in their homes and communities.

We are proud of the strides we have made in 2013. District staff is already anticipating 2014, as we begin preparing for the 2016 plan update. We look forward to working with the other water planning councils in the state on comprehensive and state-wide planning as the 2016 plan update approaches. Thank you to all who help make our plans better and stronger.



Mayor Boyd Austin  
Metro Water District Chair



# Education and Outreach

## Education and Outreach

Education and outreach are critical components of the Metro Water District plans. The My Drop Counts water conservation program and the Clean Water Campaign for stormwater pollution prevention are the heart of the District's education and outreach work. In 2013 the District launched the My Drop Counts "How much water do you use?" campaign including video, radio and movie theater public service announcements as well as billboard advertisements. Through humor and exaggeration, the audience is encouraged to question their personal water use and consider using less water. This highly successful and creative campaign has won three international awards.

The District distributed more than 50,000 brochures and educational materials in 2013. Going forward, we will continue to improve Clean Water Campaign materials and develop new brochures for both programs. Additionally, Clean Water Campaign and My Drop Counts tips and PSAs will continue to air on local stations next year.

The 12th Annual Water Essay Contest had record participation. One hundred and sixty-six teachers from 107 schools participated and more than 1,100 students submitted essays on this year's topic. The 2013 District-wide winner of the essay contest was Aubrey Gehle, an eighth grader from North Gwinnett Middle School in Gwinnett County. 2013 winners were honored at an awards reception at the State Capitol.

In March, the District partnered with local governments and utilities to host the first annual Water Drop Dash 5k Race and Water Festival. This event kicked off the US EPA's 2013 Fix a Leak Week with more than 400 participants. The 2014 Water Drop Dash 5K Race and Water Festival will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2014 at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell.



## The Plan in Practice

### Coweta County Water Authority

In January 2008, Coweta County Water Authority, Coweta County Cooperative Extension and the Coweta County School System joined forces to create the Coweta County Water Education Team (WET) in order to address water concerns and explore water conservation efforts. Coweta County WET focuses on water conservation and stormwater pollution prevention and provides training and on-going support to elementary, middle and high school teachers. Additionally, WET offers water conservation and stormwater pollution prevention contests and fieldtrips.

As WET has continued to develop, additional community partners (Newnan Utilities, Cargill, Yamaha Motor Manufacturing Corporation, Stormwater Management and the Shenandoah Youth Science and Technology Center) have come to the table and have helped create a unique partnership and very successful program. Since this program began, Coweta County schools have shown significant water savings and have provided great educational opportunities to students and teachers.











# Water Supply and Water Conservation

The Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan is the Metro Water District's framework for ensuring adequate water supply, both now and in the future. In addition to identifying needs for future storage, the plan includes 19 practicable water conservation measures to help metro area utilities, residents and businesses reduce water consumption. Implementation of these measures at the local level, along with concentrated education and outreach to residents of all ages, has enabled the Metro Water District to become a leader in water conservation.

Conservation pricing has been an integral part of the District's conservation strategy. More than 99 percent of residential water users are subject to conservation pricing, or tiered rate structures, meaning customers pay more per unit of water as their consumption increases. The 2013 implementation of activities survey asked water providers how they encourage water conservation pricing for their non-residential

customers. More than 50 percent of respondents say they have set up tiered rates for non-residential classes, and also encourage conservation through audits and educational materials.

In addition to tiered pricing, plumbing retrofits and leak repair deliver substantial water savings. More than 91,000 old and inefficient toilets have been rebated through toilet rebate programs since 2008, when the program began, and more than 8,000 leaks were detected and repaired in 2013. With increased implementation of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) water audit software, 93 percent of District water providers have ongoing meter calibration or replacement programs, and over half have asset management programs for addressing inefficiencies within the treatment plant. The Metro Water District continues to encourage the implementation of all conservation measures and offers assistance to help jurisdictions and utilities where resources are scarce.



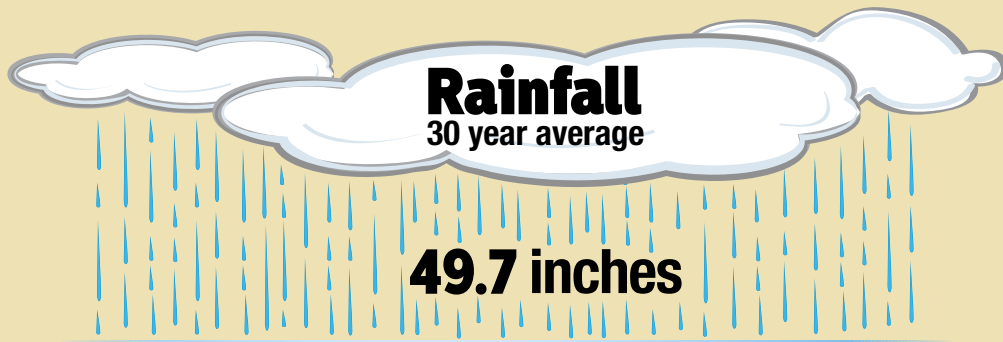
## The Plan in Practice

### Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources

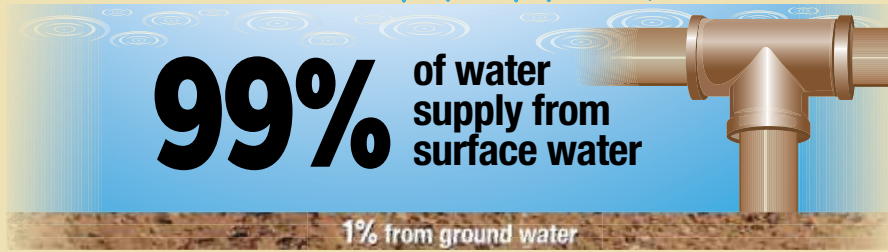
Increased focus on water losses has culminated in water audit requirements implemented by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources formed a non-revenue water team and began tackling water loss issues using each water audit category as a guide. The team includes members from finance, customer service, field operations, water production, asset management and technical services. By working together across divisions, the team has identified poorly performing water production meters at the water plants, reduced pipe breaks by controlling the pressure envelope in the distribution system and initiated programs to improve maintenance of the distribution system. New or improved programs include production meter testing and calibration, small and large customer meter replacement, leak detection, pressure management, district-metered area studies, valve inspection and financial reporting and auditing improvements. Not only has there been a reduction of non-revenue water, Gwinnett now has a better understanding of the entire system.



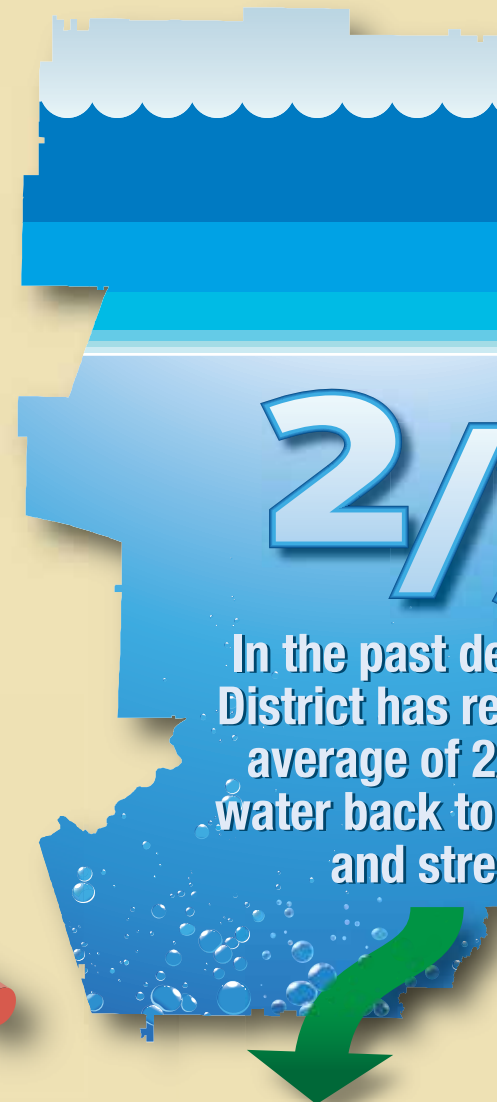
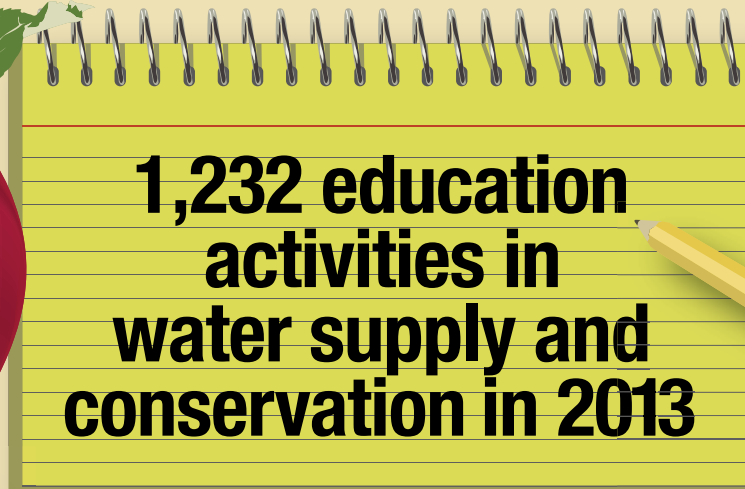
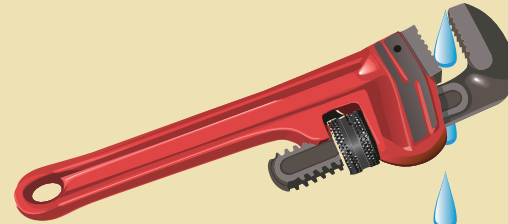
# CONVERSATION



**49.7 inches**



**8,291** leaks detected & repaired over the past year



# TIONS IN CONSERVATION



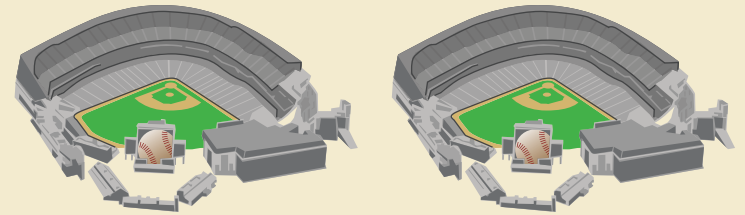
**3**  
 decade the  
 returned an  
 /3 of the  
 the rivers  
 dams



# 91,000

Water saving toilets rebated to date

That is enough seats to fill  
 Turner Field almost twice



The District saw a 10% reduction in total water withdrawals  
 despite an increase in population of 1 million



2000		
JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUG	SEPT
OCT	NOV	DEC



**10%**  
 REDUCTION

2010		
JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUG	SEPT
OCT	NOV	DEC



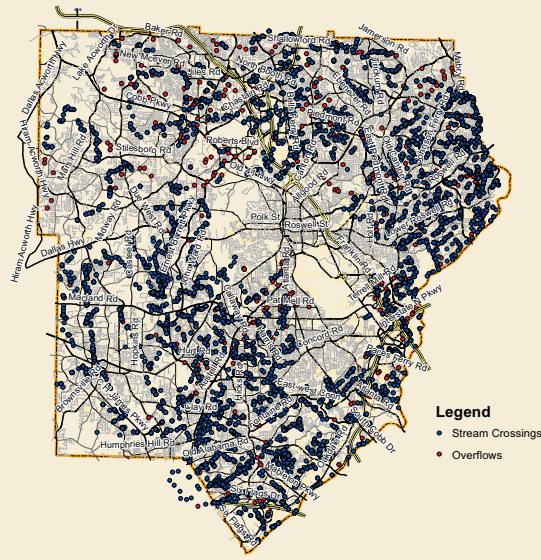
# Wastewater Management

The Wastewater Management Plan details strategies and recommendations for comprehensive wastewater management to meet future demand for wastewater treatment across metro Atlanta. It outlines a long-term implementation schedule for public wastewater treatment. The plan addresses 92 publicly owned treatment facilities, more than 16,000 miles of sanitary sewer lines, over 45,000 manholes and 500,000 septic systems in the District.

In recent years, the District's outreach and awareness efforts in wastewater management have been focused on reducing sewer overflows and spills, with a special focus on reducing those spills that are caused by fats, oils and grease (F.O.G.). This year, 83 percent of reporting jurisdictions have developed procedures for grease control and enforcement. The incidence of sanitary sewer overflows reaching "Waters of the State" was down almost 17 percent since 2010. Additionally, those jurisdictions that responded to the 2013 implementation survey reported that the number of documented spills linked to

F.O.G. in 2013 were down from last year. With nearly half of all reported sanitary sewer overflows caused by F.O.G. each year, the District will continue to educate metro area residents on the hazards of pouring grease down the drain.

Sanitary sewer overflows are significantly reduced by instituting a Capacity, Management, Operations and Maintenance (CMOM) program. Section 7 of the Wastewater Management Plan outlines elements consistent with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's CMOM program, in addition to elements associated with establishing or maintaining a wastewater collection system inspection and maintenance program. All local wastewater providers in the Metro Water District must at a minimum, establish a program consistent with Section 7. Eighty-six percent of reporting jurisdictions in the Metro Water District have programs in place, which allow wastewater providers to take a more proactive role in addressing potential sanitary sewer issues before they become a problem.



## The Plan in Practice

### Cobb County Water System

The Cobb County Water System developed a Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance (CMOM) program in 2003 that was reviewed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and agreed to by both parties as a voluntary consent agreement. By developing a CMOM program, Cobb County agrees to certain operation and maintenance requirements targeted towards preventing and mitigating the effects of sanitary sewer overflows based on the EPD Zero Tolerance Policy. This agreement allows Cobb County to be subject to reduced penalties for overflows entering the "Waters of the State."

One of the innovative features of Cobb County Water System's CMOM program is the maintenance of a GIS map of all sanitary sewer overflows and aerial sewer stream crossing inspections, with drill-down capability to view information related to each. Information about the program and weekly updates are available not only to the EPD, but also to the public at [www.cmom.cobbcountyga.gov](http://www.cmom.cobbcountyga.gov).









# Watershed Management

## Watershed Management

The Watershed Management Plan provides the framework for regional water resources protection within the 15-county Metro Water District, and is one of the most comprehensive and holistic regional programs for stormwater management and watershed protection in the nation. The plan's integrated approach prescribes both required and recommended measures for effective stormwater and watershed management to meet the overall goal of healthy watersheds and the protection and improvement of water quality.

A major goal of the Watershed Management Plan is for local communities to support their floodplain management efforts by assessing future flooding conditions. The plan requires that District jurisdictions model and map their floodplains based upon planned future land use patterns. This year's implementation survey shows that vast majority of metro communities have now undertaken future-conditions floodplain mapping activities.

Another of the Watershed Management Plan's requirements is for local communities to define their responsibilities with respect to the stormwater management infrastructure within their jurisdiction. This is done by establishing a local extent of service policy that identifies the publicly maintained portions of the stormwater system, as well as a level of service policy that details the types of services a community will provide. Local governments use these policies to develop effective ongoing maintenance and asset management programs that help to avoid problems with flooding, property damage and water quality impairments. Since this requirement was added in 2009, most communities within the District now have defined extent and level of service policies.

Many local governments have also undertaken efforts to develop pollution prevention and good housekeeping programs for public (municipal) facilities and operations in order to minimize nonpoint source and stormwater pollution.



## The Plan in Practice

### The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management

Green infrastructure is an alternative approach to managing stormwater runoff that emphasizes infiltration, evapotranspiration (uptake of water by plants) and reuse. Green infrastructure mimics the natural hydrologic function of watersheds. Examples of this approach in site development include preserving conservation areas, reducing impervious surfaces and installing structural measures such as green roofs, vegetated swales, permeable pavement, infiltration planters, cisterns and rain gardens.

The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management has revised the Metro Water District's Post-Development Stormwater Management Ordinance to promote the use of green infrastructure techniques in new and redevelopment projects in the city, and to address specific problems that have emerged since the original ordinance was adopted in 2004. In February 2013, the Atlanta City Council amended the stormwater ordinance, adding a runoff reduction requirement, revising detention pond requirements and requiring maintenance of existing detention ponds, among other provisions.



## Basin Advisory Councils

### **Chattahoochee**

Chair - *Charles McKinney*

68 members

### **Coosa/Etowah**

Chair - *Doris Cook*

37 members

### **Flint**

Chair - *Richard Greuel*

18 members

### **Lake Lanier**

Chair - *Val Perry*

23 members

### **Ocmulgee**

Chair - *Lee Pope*

36 members

### **Oconee**

Chair - *Jill Stachura*

12 members

## Technical Coordinating Committee

More than 100 active members participated in 12 subcommittee and working group meetings in 2013.



## Advisory Councils and Committees

In addition to the Governing Board, two advisory groups play a key role in the District planning process. The Basin Advisory Councils are public stakeholder groups based in each of the six water basins in the District. Members of the Advisory Councils include water and power industry professionals, representatives from business and civic groups, environmentalists, recreation enthusiasts, agriculture representatives and interested citizens. The diversity of interests and knowledge represented in the Advisory Councils ensures that our plans are balanced and include a variety of perspectives. At their quarterly meetings, members of the Advisory Councils tour various facilities and hear from experts on innovative ways to protect and manage water resources. In 2013, the Basin Advisory Councils learned about reuse, innovative water conservation techniques for golf courses, new water quality and nutrient standards for Lake Lanier and Allatoona Lake, the Yellow River Water Trail and ways to promote and provide incentives for green infrastructure in metro Atlanta.

The Technical Coordinating Committees are made up of professionals in each planning area. The District relies on this group to provide topnotch technical expertise and recommendations. In 2013, Technical Committee members reviewed best practices and advised District staff on various plan components including education and outreach materials, water reuse and returns, alternative business models for water and wastewater utilities, rate structures for multi-family residential and a thorough review of the revised Model Floodplain Management / Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

District staff relies on and welcomes the Basin Advisory Councils and Technical Committees to advise us on plan elements so that the plans are as comprehensive and effective as possible. Next year, both groups will begin visioning and goal-setting in preparation for the 2016 plan update.

# 2013 Financials

The Metro Water District operates on a calendar year budget, with the majority of the revenues coming from local government dues (\$773,239) and the State of Georgia (\$250,000). For 2013, local government dues were \$0.16 per capita (based on the 2010 Census).

The following is a review of the revenues and expenses for 2013. This accounting is subject to adjustment after fiscal year-end close and independent audit.

## Financials for 2014

In December of this year, the District Governing Board adopted a final budget of \$1,532,588 for 2014, with the majority of the revenues coming from local governments (\$1,039,040) and the state (\$250,000). To prepare for the upcoming plan update, the District Governing Board approved staggered dues increases over the next three years. For the 2014 budget, dues will be \$0.215 per capita (based on the 2010 Census).

<b>Beginning General Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$444,500</b>	<b>\$659,951</b>
	<b>2013 Budget</b> Adopted June 7, 2012	<b>2013 Budget Revision</b>
<b>Revenues</b>		
Direct State Funding	\$250,000	\$250,000
Local Dues (\$0.16 per capita)	\$773,239	\$773,239
Interest Income	\$2,000	\$2,000
Misc./Fees	\$60,000	\$60,000
Designated "I'm In" (My Drop Counts) Carryover	--	\$172,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,085,239</b>	<b>\$1,257,239</b>
<b>Expenses by Type</b>		
Chairman's Allowance	\$3,000	\$3,000
District Planning Function		
Salaries	\$362,008	\$362,008
Fringe Benefits	\$205,677	\$208,667
Contracts	\$70,000	\$10,000
Overhead	\$255,458	\$239,458
Miscellaneous Operating	\$80,000	\$70,000
Public Awareness/Education	\$150,000	\$96,000
"I'm In" (My Drop Counts)	--	\$129,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,126,143</b>	<b>\$1,118,133</b>

Designated "I'm In" / My Drop Counts Carryover	\$43,000
Estimated Ending General Fund Balance	\$756,057

# 2013 Activities & Progress Report



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District  
40 Courtland Street, NE | Atlanta, GA 30303  
404.463.3256 | fax: 404.463.3254

[www.northgeorgiawater.org](http://www.northgeorgiawater.org)