



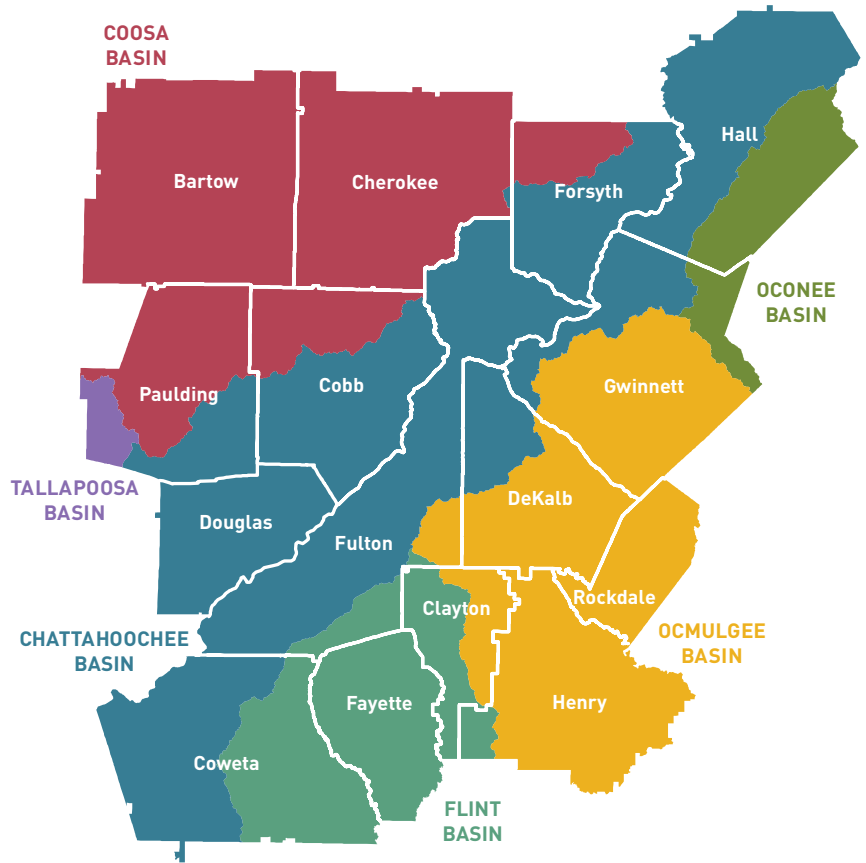
2019 Activities & Progress Report

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District



About the District

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the Metro Water District, or simply, the District) was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 as a regional water resources planning agency. The Metro Water District is staffed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and develops comprehensive action items and strategies for the management of water supply and water conservation, wastewater, and stormwater for the 15-county, 95-city metro Atlanta area. The first suite of plans was adopted in 2003 and updated in 2009. The District completed the second update in June of 2017. For the first time, the three separate plans were combined into a single, integrated Water Resource Management Plan.



2019 Governing Board Members

— Elected Officials —

The Hon. Charlotte Nash (District Chair)
Chairman, Gwinnett County Commission

The Hon. Keisha Lance Bottoms
Mayor, City of Atlanta

The Hon. Steve Taylor
Commissioner, Bartow County

The Hon. Harry Johnston
Chairman, Cherokee County Commission

The Hon. Jeff Turner
Chairman, Clayton County Commission

The Hon. Mike Boyce
Chairman, Cobb County Commission

The Hon. Paul Poole
Chairman, Coweta County Commission

The Hon. Michael L. Thurmond
CEO, DeKalb County

The Hon. Romona Jackson Jones
Chairman, Douglas County Commission

The Hon. Randy Ognio
Chairman, Fayette County Commission

The Hon. Laura Semanson
Chairman, Forsyth County Commission

The Hon. Robb Pitts
Chairman, Fulton County Commission

The Hon. Danny Dunagan
Mayor, City of Gainesville, Hall County

The Hon. June Wood
Chairman, Henry County Commission

The Hon. Boyd Austin, Jr.
Mayor, City of Dallas, Paulding County

The Hon. Oz Nesbitt, Sr.
Chairman, Rockdale County Commission

— Citizen Members —

Katie Kirkpatrick (*Vice Chair*), Atlanta
Birdel Jackson (*Secretary/Treasurer*), Atlanta
Mark Berry, Atlanta

Pam Burnett, Marietta
Bradley Currey, Jr., Atlanta
Kit Dunlap, Gainesville

Glenn Page, Marietta
Gerald Pouncey, Jr., Atlanta
Tim Thoms, Fayetteville

Cover photo credit: Diana Petrova of Chamblee, GA

Progress on Many Fronts in 2019

For the past 18 years, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has served as the comprehensive planning and policy-making entity for water supply and conservation, wastewater, and watershed management for the 15-county metro Atlanta area. The District has always been greater than the political boundaries that define us; we are an interconnected body of local jurisdictions and utilities working together to implement common goals.

The District is the only major metro area in the country with 110 jurisdictions working in coordination to implement such an impactful suite of integrated water resource stewardship measures. We bring together elected and appointed officials, technical experts, and stakeholders in over 40 meetings and discussion forums each year to share ideas and best practices, and develop and refine plan components.

In June of 2017, the District Governing Board adopted the Water Resource Management Plan, an integrated and holistic document that, for the first time in our region, successfully brought all our planning areas together under one cohesive plan. With over 50 action items carefully crafted and thoroughly vetted by technical experts and stakeholders, our plan is comprehensive and strong.

In 2019, the District entered the second year of planning activities in a five-year cycle under the new Plan. This year, District staff worked hard to dig deep into action items and work closely with our utility counterparts to find out what action items are working well in practice and to determine areas where more data are needed or any new challenges that have arisen.

To address emerging issues, District staff, in partnership with member utilities, undertook or completed several new studies and pilot projects, including the Septic System Impacts to Surface Water Quality Study and Residential New Homes Water Use Study. Additionally, the District worked with 17 utilities to identify commercial water users with potential for significant savings and to offer free efficiency assessments of indoor fixtures.

On a broader level, the Alliance for Water Efficiency recently ranked the State of Georgia number one in the nation for water loss control requirements across the state. District utilities go even further: Rather than merely meeting the state requirement, they fulfill the District's action item on water loss, which requires utilities meet certain goals by 2025. Actions like these are why water withdrawals in our region have fallen by 10 percent, even as our population has increased by 1.3 million. Our partner utilities and local

governments are to be commended for their ongoing commitment to implementing the plan and for helping to raise the bar for regional water resource planning.

2019 also brought opportunities for building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones with other state agencies, nonprofits, and businesses, both in our region and across the state. It is a top goal of the District to work together with all parties to protect our state's shared water resources. One of the ways we do this is through partnerships that can elevate everyone's messaging and increase our reach. We look forward to expanding our partnerships and educational offerings throughout the state in the new year.

In addition, this year we celebrate the successful passage of the updated Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance, originally adopted in 2002. The adoption of this ordinance represents years of collaboration with stakeholder groups and the public. The new ordinance will regulate the proper management of post-construction stormwater runoff to safeguard public health and protect water resources.

We are also proud of the enhancement of our Toilet Rebate Program: We now accept rebate applications from multi-family properties, and, with more than 600 rebates issued for just two properties, we expect this initiative to improve water efficiency in multi-family residential complexes significantly.

Finally, in October of this year, the District was honored to receive U.S. EPA's 2019 WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for our innovative programming, which attracts about 3,000 participants annually, and for our commitment to promoting high efficiency standards. Sustained Excellence is EPA WaterSense's top award, and 2019 marks the second straight year that the District has received this prestigious recognition.

As I look at the successes of 2019, I am reminded of how far we have come in 18 years. We look forward to strong partnerships new and existing as we continue our Plan update in 2020. We accept the new challenges that the Plan update will bring, and we are excited about our region's water future!



Hon. Charlotte Nash
Metro Water District Chair



Education and Public Participation

Innovative and Impactful Public Engagement

Educating metro Atlanta residents of all ages about watershed protection and water conservation and efficiency is a critical component of the Metro Water District's planning efforts. For 18 years, the District has hosted engaging and interactive educational events and contests for the public and has provided partners, local governments, and water providers with high-quality educational resources and programming assistance. This year alone, the District provided over 38,000 materials and resources to its partners, local governments, and water providers.

In 2019, the District continued to build its resource catalogue, focusing on new messages including "Your Toilet Is Not a Trashcan" and the human water cycle. The District also created the "Map My Water" exercise, in which participants explore how the geology and geography of their region affects water resource availability where they live. Additionally, for the first time, the District hosted a Spanish-language high school video contest, for which students created a 30-60 second public service announcement about the value of water.

The District also continued to build partnerships with businesses and nonprofits in the region and throughout the state. Thanks to partners like EAM Landscaping and PeachDish, the District was able to offer more robust programming and expand its reach. The District was also proud to participate, alongside the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District, in Georgia's Smart Irrigation Month declared by Governor Brian Kemp. Finally, the District was excited to partner with the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership on a statewide water education program funded by the Mott Foundation.

The My Drop Counts water conservation campaign and the Clean Water Campaign for stormwater pollution prevention continue to be successful at influencing residents and businesses to take steps toward becoming better stewards of their shared water resources. Four signature contests — the Middle School Essay Contest, the High School Video Contest, the Water Reflections Calendar Photo Contest, and the Water Drop Dash 5k Race T-Shirt Contest — continue to educate participants on the importance of water conservation and watershed protection. Two hallmark events — the Water Drop Dash 5K Race and the Children's Water Festival — continue to provide residents with meaningful engagement opportunities. Combined, District events and contests generated more than 2,900 participants throughout the year. The District is proud to offer events and programming to residents of all ages.

In October, the District was honored to receive the U.S. EPA's 2019 WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for its innovative programming including the Society of Intentionally Dry Lawns, which encourages residents to significantly reduce outdoor watering, and the Septic Realtor Training, which educates realtors about issues such as the connection between water conservation and septic system health. The Sustained Excellence Award is EPA WaterSense's top award, and 2019 marks the second consecutive year the District has received this prestigious recognition.



38,000

The District provided over **38,000 materials and resources** to its partners, local governments, and water providers in 2019.

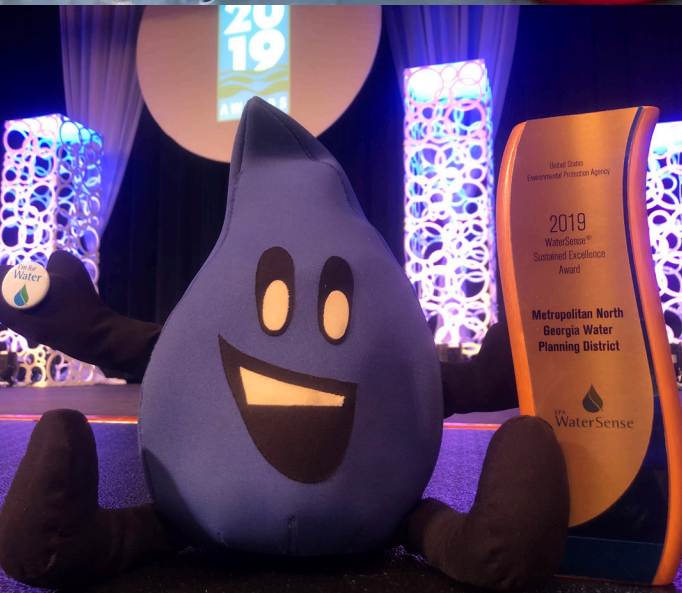


The District raised its total **number of national awards for water conservation, education, and outreach programs** to **10** in 2019.



2,900+

Over **2,900 residents** participated in District contests and signature events.





Water Resource Management Plan

A Holistic, Integrated Approach to Water Planning

In June 2017, the Metro Water District Governing Board approved a Water Resources Management Plan that, for the first time, successfully integrated water supply and conservation, wastewater and septic management, and watershed management into a single, holistic planning approach. The District is a recognized national leader in water resources management, and this plan continues that legacy.

The District's conservation planning efforts since 2001 have proven so successful that water withdrawals in the region have fallen by 10 percent, even as population has increased by 1.3 million. This year, District staff took a long look at how the region can become even more water-efficient, especially in outdoor water use.

As new technologies arise and are successfully implemented at the local level, the District has the unique opportunity to be able to shepherd them through to regional implementation. This year, District staff led a special committee of the region's advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) users to help utilities coordinate and share information about how they are incorporating this advanced technology into their utility management. AMI provides utilities with more real-time data than existing technologies, thus improving customer experience, water efficiency, and overall system management.

In wastewater planning, the disposal of biosolids (the solids that remain following wastewater treatment) has emerged as a new challenge for many of the District's utilities due to increased landfill-disposal costs. This year, the District elevated the discussion through its stakeholder committees as well as Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, the Georgia Association of Water Professionals, and other organizations to gather data and discuss options to reduce the economic burden that has disrupted the industry.

The District also completed the Septic System Impacts to Surface Water Quality Study which indicated no significant correlation between septic density and studied water quality parameters during dry weather. The District plans to begin a similar study for wet weather conditions in 2020 to support future planning efforts.

In 2020, the District will continue working on the next plan update slated for approval in 2022. District staff and utility partners will build on the successes of the current Plan by integrating new concepts and emerging topics of importance in the water industry.

Adoption of the 2019 Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance *Successful Stormwater Planning in Action*

This year, the District celebrated the passage of the updated Post-Construction Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment Ordinance, originally adopted in 2002. The New Model Ordinance establishes minimum requirements and procedures for proper management of stormwater runoff from developed sites to minimize damage to public and private property and infrastructure; safeguard the health, safety, environment, and general welfare of the public; and protect water resources.

This work represents years of collaboration with stakeholders, partners, and the public, including multiple drafts, with a primary objective of better aligning it with recent stormwater management regulatory changes outlined in the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit and the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual. One of the significant updates is the inclusion of runoff reduction requirements which provide water quality benefits to surface water and recharge ground water resources.

District jurisdictions will be required to adopt the Model Ordinance or an equivalent ordinance by December 2020 as outlined in the EPD MS4 Permit.

Technical Assistance Program

One-Stop-Shop for Plan Implementation Needs

Since 2016, the District's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) has played a critical role in assisting the Metro Water District's local governments and water utilities in successfully implementing action items laid out in the Water Resources Management Plan. TAP provides high-quality, well-integrated technical assistance to help partners identify resources and develop strategies to address specific issues.

Part of what makes District planning efforts so impactful is its collaborative relationship with Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and partner local governments and utilities. EPD audits the region's water utilities and authorities on their compliance with the District plan measures and renews and issues permits based on that compliance. Each utility undergoes the audit process every five years. In 2019, TAP focused on providing one-on-one assistance to local governments and water providers that were being audited. TAP also met with EPD staff to provide an understanding of the requirements contained in each plan measure. The one-on-one meetings proved to be particularly constructive and the District will continue this technical assistance model moving forward.

2019 also marked the home stretch for a major ongoing project. With grant funding from Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), District staff updated the Source Water Assessment Plans (SWAPs), originally adopted in 2000, with current data, spatial analysis, and field visits for data verification. The finalized SWAPs are set to be completed by early 2020 and will help governments and utilities identify potential sources of contamination to their drinking water supplies.

The District expanded existing services offered under the Toilet Rebate Program, originally created in 2008, to include multi-family buildings. Through the new multi-family incentive program, this year saw the replacement of more than 600 outdated, inefficient toilets with newer, more efficient models. The District is working to expand participation in the multi-family program in the coming years.

Finally, TAP launched a new pilot project to address the District's plan requirement for water utilities to perform water-use assessments on commercial properties. The intent of the measure is to reduce commercial customers' water use by assessing that use onsite and identifying potential for improved efficiency. The District worked with 17 utilities to identify commercial water users with potential for savings and offer free efficiency assessments of indoor fixtures. Results from this pilot year will guide the next steps for the project.

19

The District conducted **19 one-on-one meetings** with local governments and utilities to assist with plan compliance.



600+

Over **600 toilets** were rebated through the new Multi-family Toilet Rebate Program.



17

Seventeen utilities participated in a new pilot project to reduce water-use from commercial water customers.



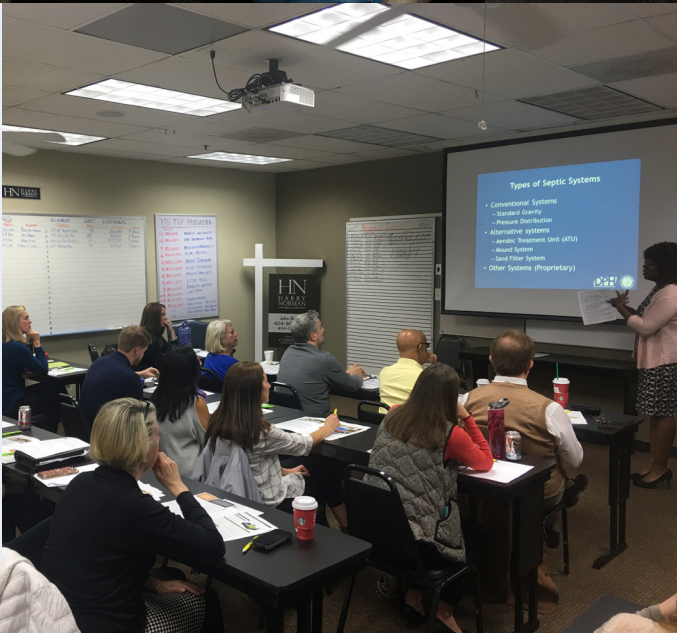




Photo credit: Diana Petrova, Chamblee, GA

Financials for 2019

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District operated on a calendar-year budget, with the majority of revenues coming from local government dues (\$1,208,186), state of Georgia allocations (\$192,000), funding from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) (\$50,000), and a grant from GEFA and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (\$139,400) to continue the update of the Source Water Assessment Plans across the District. The \$0.25 per capita dues for 2019 represent

an increase from the 2018 dues of \$0.20. The budget included funding to continue the District's multi-year implementation tasks including the next plan update, which is scheduled to begin in 2020.

Below is a review of the revenues and expenses for 2019. This accounting is subject to adjustment after fiscal year-end close and an independent audit.

	2019 Budget	2019 Budget
	Approved May 23, 2018	Approved December 4, 2019
Beginning Fund Balance (Estimated)	\$534,780	\$615,613
Revenues		
State Funding (Appropriations).	\$250,000	\$192,000
State Funding (GEFA).	-	\$50,000
Source Water Assessment Plan Grant (GEFA/DNR)	\$139,974	\$139,400
Local Dues (2010 Census at \$0.25 per capita)	\$1,208,186	\$1,208,186
Interest Income	\$1,000	\$1,000
Misc. Fees	\$45,000	\$45,000
Total Revenues	\$1,644,160	\$1,635,586
Expenses by Type		
Chairman's Allowance	\$3,000	\$0
Salaries	\$560,691	\$537,768
Fringe Benefits	\$298,765	\$268,465
Contracts.	\$175,000	\$110,000
Overhead	\$438,323	\$390,220
Miscellaneous Operating	\$83,000	\$75,000
Public Awareness / Education	\$100,000	\$75,000
Total Expenses	\$1,658,779	\$1,456,453
Projected Ending Fund Balance	\$520,161	\$794,746



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

International Tower, 229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 100 | Atlanta, GA 30303

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is staffed by the Atlanta Regional Commission and manages a comprehensive, integrated plan for water supply and water conservation, wastewater, and watershed management in the 15-county metro Atlanta region.

northgeorgiawater.org



@NorthGAWater | comments@northgeorgiawater.com