

# 2024 Activities & Progress Report

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District



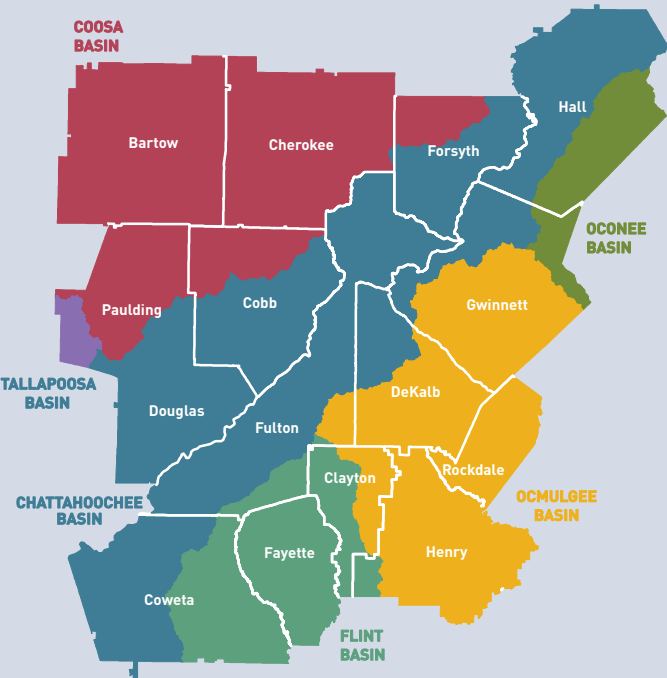


# About the District

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 develops comprehensive action items and strategies for the management of water supply and water conservation, wastewater, and stormwater for the 15-county, 96-city metropolitan Atlanta region. The first suite of plans was adopted in 2003 and updated in 2009.

The District completed the second update in June 2017, when, for the first time, the three separate plans were combined into a single, integrated Water Resources Management Plan (the District Plan).

The third update of the District Plan was adopted in December 2022 and included new water efficiency code requirements for the region and the first-of-its-kind Stormwater Forecast which represents a region-wide accounting of the runoff volume from developed lands that have the potential to be managed by stormwater control measures.



## Citizen Members

Glenn Page (*District Chair*), Marietta  
Dr. Mark Berry (*Secretary/Treasurer*),  
City of Atlanta  
Pam Burnett, *City of Marietta*

Albert Edwards, *DeKalb County*  
Benjamin Jordan, *City of Decatur*  
Gerald Pouncey, Jr., *City of Atlanta*  
Sara Ray, *Cobb County*

Darrell Rochester, *Hall County*  
Tim Thoms, *City of Fayetteville*  
Dave Williams, *City of Suwanee*

## 2024 Governing Board Members Elected Officials

The Hon. Andre Dickens  
*Mayor, City of Atlanta*  
The Hon. Steve Taylor  
*Commissioner, Bartow County*  
The Hon. Harry Johnston  
*Chair, Cherokee County Commission*  
The Hon. John Reidelbach  
*Chairman, Coweta County Commission*  
The Hon. Lisa Cupid  
*Chair, Cobb County Commission*  
The Hon. John Reidelbach  
*Chairman, Coweta County Commission*  
The Hon. Michael L. Thurmond  
*CEO, DeKalb County*  
The Hon. Phil Miller  
*Chair, Douglas County Commission*  
The Hon. Lee Hearn  
*Chairman, Fayette County Commission*  
The Hon. Alfred John  
*Chair, Forsyth County Commission*  
The Hon. Robb Pitts  
*Chair, Fulton County Commission*  
The Hon. Nicole Love Hendrickson  
*(District Vice Chair)*  
*Chair, Gwinnett County Commission*  
The Hon. Richard Higgins  
*Chair, Hall County Commission*  
The Hon. Carlotta Harrell  
*Chair, Henry County Commission*  
The Hon. James Kelly  
*Mayor, City of Dallas*  
The Hon. Oz Nesbitt, Sr.  
*Chair, Rockdale County Commission*

# A Letter from Our Chairman

As the saying goes, “The only constant in life is change.” At the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, we embrace change as a chance to strengthen our resilience and, sharpen our ability to adapt—both vital qualities in the water industry.

## Meeting Challenges Together

In 2024, our region faced critical tests: water supply, infrastructure, extreme weather, regulatory shifts, and rising costs. Decades of planning and partnerships enabled the District to support communities as they met these challenges head-on. Drought conditions blanketed our region at the end of 2023 and during the summer of 2024, which was immediately followed by Hurricane Helene’s record-breaking rainfall with over 11 inches in Atlanta falling within 48 hours. These extremes underscore the importance of collaborative planning to protect our communities and resources.

Our efforts go beyond immediate needs during these oscillating dry and wet conditions. Throughout the year, we work with local partners to promote stewardship and help manage demand. This year, we expanded our conservation education with Georgia Public Broadcasting, launching a Virtual Learning Journey for students to explore our water sources, treatment processes, and industry careers. In October, our team was honored with the District’s seventh EPA Award for Sustained Excellence, recognizing 16 years of support for EPA’s WaterSense program. Additionally, our efforts to engage with citizen members of our six Basin Advisory Councils helped to maintain an educated stakeholder base. This year the District conducted meetings across the region, touring facilities and sharing the latest developments in best practices for water resource management and emerging trends such as the rapid rise of data centers in metro Atlanta.

## An Eye on Infrastructure

In 2024, the District engaged in listening sessions with several of our metro utility partners to gather input on the status of asset management planning. While metro Atlanta’s infrastructure is relatively young compared to other major metro areas of our size, we strive to anticipate and prepare for the upcoming challenges of repairing and replacing the first generation of our buried assets. Maintaining our infrastructure in a state of good repair reduces the likelihood of major water outages, water loss through leaks, dangerous sinkholes, and the prevalence of sewer spills affecting public health and our drinking water supplies.

## Planning Ahead

This year, we began the process of updating our five-year Water Resources Management Plan, a collaborative blueprint to secure the region’s future water supply, watershed health, and infrastructure. This living plan integrates input from stakeholders and anticipates critical factors like population growth, facility needs, and water quality, providing solutions and a clear path forward for addressing our most significant water challenges and needs. Using innovative tools like the District’s new stormwater forecast, our team members have engaged leaders about the need for focused stormwater planning to manage future growth and increasing storm intensities.

## Moving Forward Together

At the District, we’re fortunate to have a skilled and dedicated team committed to maximizing our impact. As we look ahead to 2025, we’re focused on continued collaboration with our partners to drive innovative and sustainable changes that will support the resilience and vitality of our communities for years to come.

Thank you for your support and commitment to our shared future.

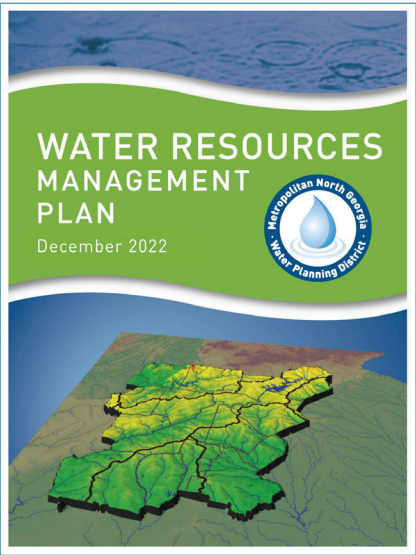


*Glenn Page*  
Chairman Glenn Page



# Flowing Forward

## Updating the Five-Year Water Resources Management Plan



The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has begun the planning process for the five-year update to the Water Resources Management Plan. That process started with seeking input from partner communities across the region to improve on the latest version of the plan. The team initially has focused on collecting comments and suggestions on Section 2: Planning Principles and Management Challenges of the 2022 Plan for consideration in the next update. The District anticipates new and continued focus on aging infrastructure, linear transportation facility’s impact on total imperviousness and water quality, and exploring the relationship between water quality and water quantity.

## Technical Assistance Program



This year, the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) focused on improving resource accessibility by revamping the TAP web pages. Key resources, such as model codes & ordinances and educational material were prominently highlighted for easier access. Newer resources, such as the GPB Virtual Learning Journey and Stormwater Forecast Script Tool, were promoted online to improve visibility and all materials referenced in the Plan or by staff in stakeholder interactions were made readily available online on our list of resources, plans and studies.

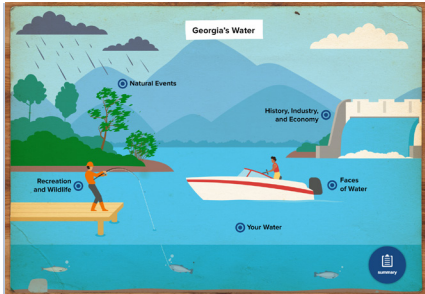
## PROTECT Grant to Assess Stormwater and Transportation-related Issues



The Atlanta Regional Commission received a \$1.5 million PROTECT (Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation) grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to develop a Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP). This plan will assess vulnerabilities and guide transportation improvements, including stormwater infrastructure, for current and future weather events. The TRIP may guide updates to the District’s Water Resources Management Plan.



# Drop by Drop: Partnerships and Progress



## Virtual Learning Journey

Expanding upon our successful partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting, in March 2024 the District launched a Virtual Learning Journey to educate students grades 3-8 with informational videos, virtual reality, interactive maps and graphics, photo galleries, and informative text. Aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, this resource invites students to discover where Georgia's water comes from, how water is treated, impacts of weather events, how to conserve and protect water resources, career opportunities in the water industry, and more. To date, over 18,000 viewers have engaged with the Virtual Learning Journey.



## Water Drop Dash 5K

The District proudly partnered with the Chattahoochee Nature Center (CNC) for the 12th annual Water Drop Dash on March 16, celebrating Fix a Leak Week, which encourages homeowners to check for leaks to save water and money. Over 700 participants enjoyed the fast, flat and scenic course along the Chattahoochee River in Roswell, Georgia, with options for a 5K, Fun Run, and virtual race. Runners received a Water Drop Dash T-shirt featuring a community design, finisher medals, placement pins, free race photos, and enjoyed giveaways, crafts, and more at the Family Water Festival, plus free CNC admission on race day.



## WaterSense Partnership

The District received its seventh Sustained Excellence Award and 10th award overall from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) WaterSense program for our long-standing dedication to water conservation, collaboration, WaterSense outreach, and water resources education. Staff accepted the award on Thursday, Sept. 26 during the annual WaterSmart Innovations Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas, alongside organizations from across the U.S., for their commitment to promoting WaterSense and water efficiency in 2023.

# It's No Contest: Annual Competitions Appeal to Broader Audiences



## Middle School Essay Contest

The 23rd annual Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Middle School Essay Contest invited 6th-8th graders from our 15 counties to use the new Virtual Learning Journey to explore Georgia's water resources. With over 800 essays written, students chose to write about one of three topics: how water has shaped the region, a comparison of water industry careers, or the importance of water conservation for recreational activities.



## Calendar Contest

We highlighted photos from last year's Calendar Contest winners on our social media platforms each month to celebrate their submissions and the beautiful natural resources across the region. Out of more than 100 submissions in the 2024 contest, Carlos Esteban Gomez Llata Cazares submitted the winning photo, "A Slice of Paradise," taken at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell, Georgia.

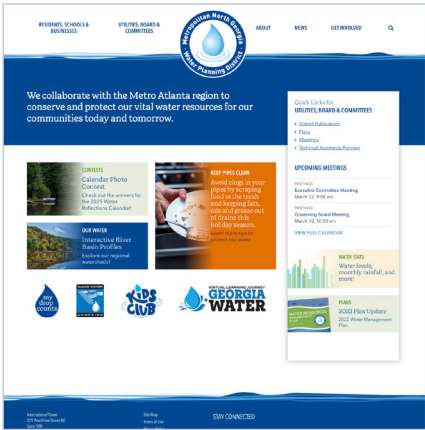


## High School Video Contest

Participants in the 2024 video contest created engaging 30-60 second PSAs on the theme "Making Water Smart," looking at all the ways technology and innovation help improve water conservation. Thirty-three students submitted 13 entries, individually or in teams. This year, the High School Video Contest broadened its reach with English, Spanish, and TikTok categories.

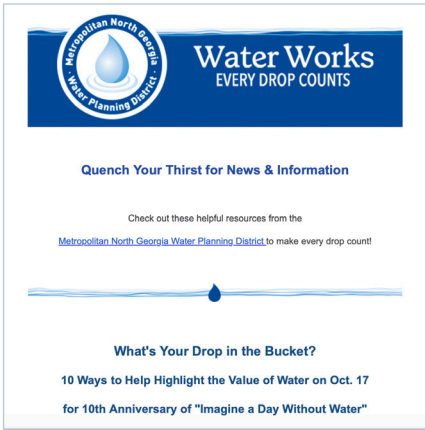


# Digital Tools Make Waves



## Website

Our new, more user-friendly and informative website continues to be a valuable tool to inform the public. New resources and popular information included our water stats page, with roughly 1.6 million visits, as well as rebates information, River Basin Profiles and Basin Advisory Councils pages, and the Middle School Essay Contest.



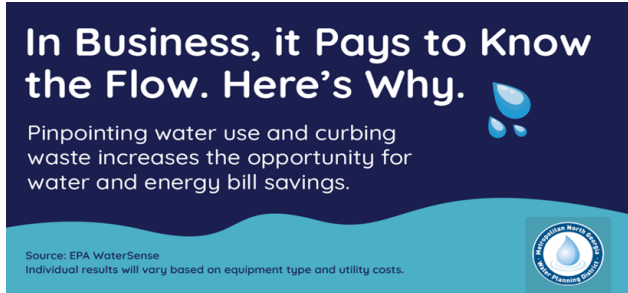
## Water Works Newsletter

We re-launched our quarterly e-newsletter, Water Works, to keep the region updated on news, water conservation tips, and District resources. It has been well received, and is sent to nearly 500 recipients. It is also posted on social media for additional interactions.



## Social Media

The District's social media channels continue to be effective tools for sharing information with stakeholders, with strong growth and engagement throughout the year across LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X. Total updates from 2023 to 2024: Audience increased by 5.7% to 4,559 Impressions increased by 17.7% to 80,323 Engagements increased by 4.3% to 5,146 Post link clicks increased by 3% to 1,321



## My Drop Counts Business Pledge

This year, we expanded the My Drop Counts campaign with new website content, social media posts, e-newsletter updates, and workplace materials like surface clings and posters to promote water conservation. We also ran a LinkedIn campaign in August to boost awareness of the Business Pledge. Based on these results, the District is planning to launch a streamlined Business Pledge and campaign in 2025 to boost participation.





# Riding the Waves of Change



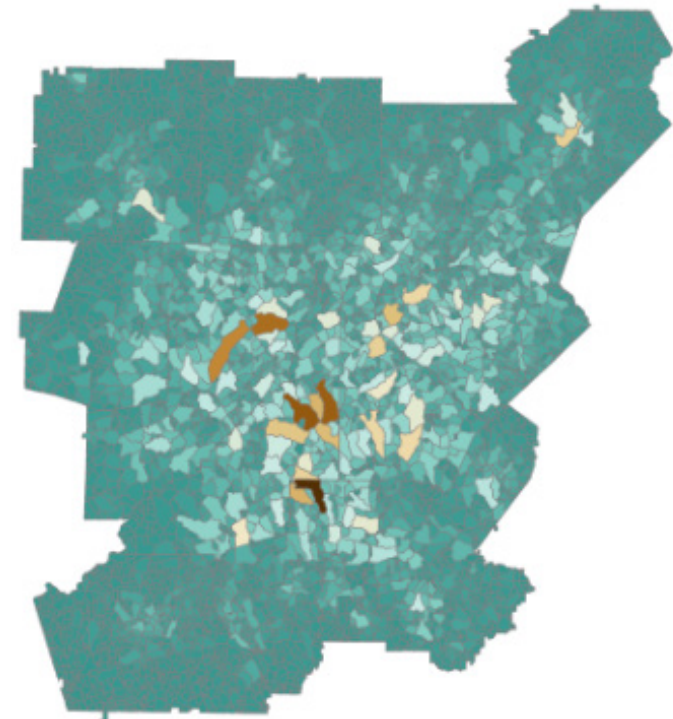
## Research to Address Future Supply Needs

One of the biggest developments making headlines across the region in 2024 is the influx of data centers and their impact on the communities where they operate - including the anticipated sizable volume of water supplies they require. This year, the District conducted research regarding the implementation of data centers and their possible influences on the region's water supply given the increasing demand for these facilities across Metro Atlanta. As a result of the research, the District is actively communicating with local governments to encourage them to involve water utilities in early conversations with data center developers and implement best practices to reduce their reliance on local water resources.

## Automating Stormwater Forecast Calculations

In January 2024, the District launched the Stormwater Forecast Script Tool. This user-friendly tool automates the process of calculating planning-level estimates of stormwater runoff volumes for an area of interest. It leverages the District's novel Stormwater Forecast, introduced in 2022, which offers watershed managers valuable insights for ongoing challenges related to water quality, streambank erosion, and nuisance flooding. The tool is conveniently accessible on the Atlanta Regional Commission's Open Data and Mapping Hub.

Based on current development patterns, the results of the Stormwater Forecast show the 15-county Metro Atlanta region should be managing up to 27 billion cubic feet of runoff volume with Stormwater Control Measures, and if regulations remain the same, the total volumes are estimated to increase by up to 100 percent by 2040.



# 2024 Financials

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District operated on a calendar-year budget, with revenues coming from local government dues (\$1,398,593) and state funding from the Georgia General Assembly (\$250,000).

In 2024, Miscellaneous Fees were reduced to reflect fewer submittals than anticipated to the Post Construction Stormwater Technical Assistance Program. Expenses were adjusted to reflect anticipated expenses by the end of the year.

The District will continue to maintain a consistent dues rate of \$0.25 per capita for future years and fund the future work for the 2028 Water Resources Management Plan Update that will begin in 2025. The District strives to maintain a minimum fund balance of \$300,000 for operating contingencies.

	2024 Budget Approved May 12, 2023	2024 Budget Approved December 11, 2024
<b>Revenues</b>		
State Funding (Appropriations) . . . . .	\$250,000 . . . . .	\$250,000
Local Dues (2010 Census at \$0.25 per capita) . . . . .	\$1,398,593 . . . . .	\$1,398,593
Interest Income . . . . .	\$250 . . . . .	\$60,000
Misc. Fees. . . . .	\$17,000 . . . . .	\$11,000
<b>Total Revenues . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,665,842 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,719,593</b>
<b>Expenses by Type</b>		
Chairman's Allowance. . . . .	\$3,000 . . . . .	\$1,000
Salaries. . . . .	\$647,325 . . . . .	\$650,000
Fringe Benefits. . . . .	\$336,609 . . . . .	\$325,000
Overhead . . . . .	\$439,818 . . . . .	\$323,700
Contracts . . . . .	\$115,000 . . . . .	\$80,000
Miscellaneous Operating . . . . .	\$65,000 . . . . .	\$75,000
Public Awareness / Education . . . . .	\$100,000 . . . . .	\$95,000
<b>Total Expenses. . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,706,752 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,549,700</b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance . . . . .</b>	<b>\$991,311</b>	
<b>Projected Ending Fund Balance . . . . .</b>		<b>\$1,161,203</b>





### **Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District**

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.

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

