



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

2007 Activities & Progress Report



2007 Water District Board Members

Elected Officials

City of Atlanta – *Hon. Shirley Franklin*

Bartow County – *Hon. Clarence Brown*

Cherokee County – *Hon. Cecil Pruett (City of Canton)*

Clayton County – *Hon. Eldrin Bell*

Cobb County – *Hon. Sam Olens (District Vice Chairman)*

Coweta County – *Hon. Tim Higgins*

DeKalb County – *Hon. Vernon Jones*

Douglas County – *Hon. Tom Worthan*

Fayette County – *Hon. Jack Smith*

Forsyth County – *Hon. Charlie Laughinghouse*

Fulton County – *Hon. John Eaves*

Gwinnett County – *Hon. Charles Bannister*

Hall County – *Hon. Tom Oliver*

Henry County – *Hon. Jason Harper*

Paulding County – *Hon. Jerry Shearin*

Rockdale County – *Hon. Roy Middlebrooks*

Walton County – *Hon. Kevin Little*

Citizen Members

Mr. William Thomas Craig, Covington, GA

Mr. Bradley N. Currey, Jr., Atlanta, GA

Ms. Kit L. Dunlap, (District Chairman), Gainesville, GA

Mr. Bob Fountain, Macon, GA

Mr. Gardiner W. Garrard, Jr., Columbus, GA

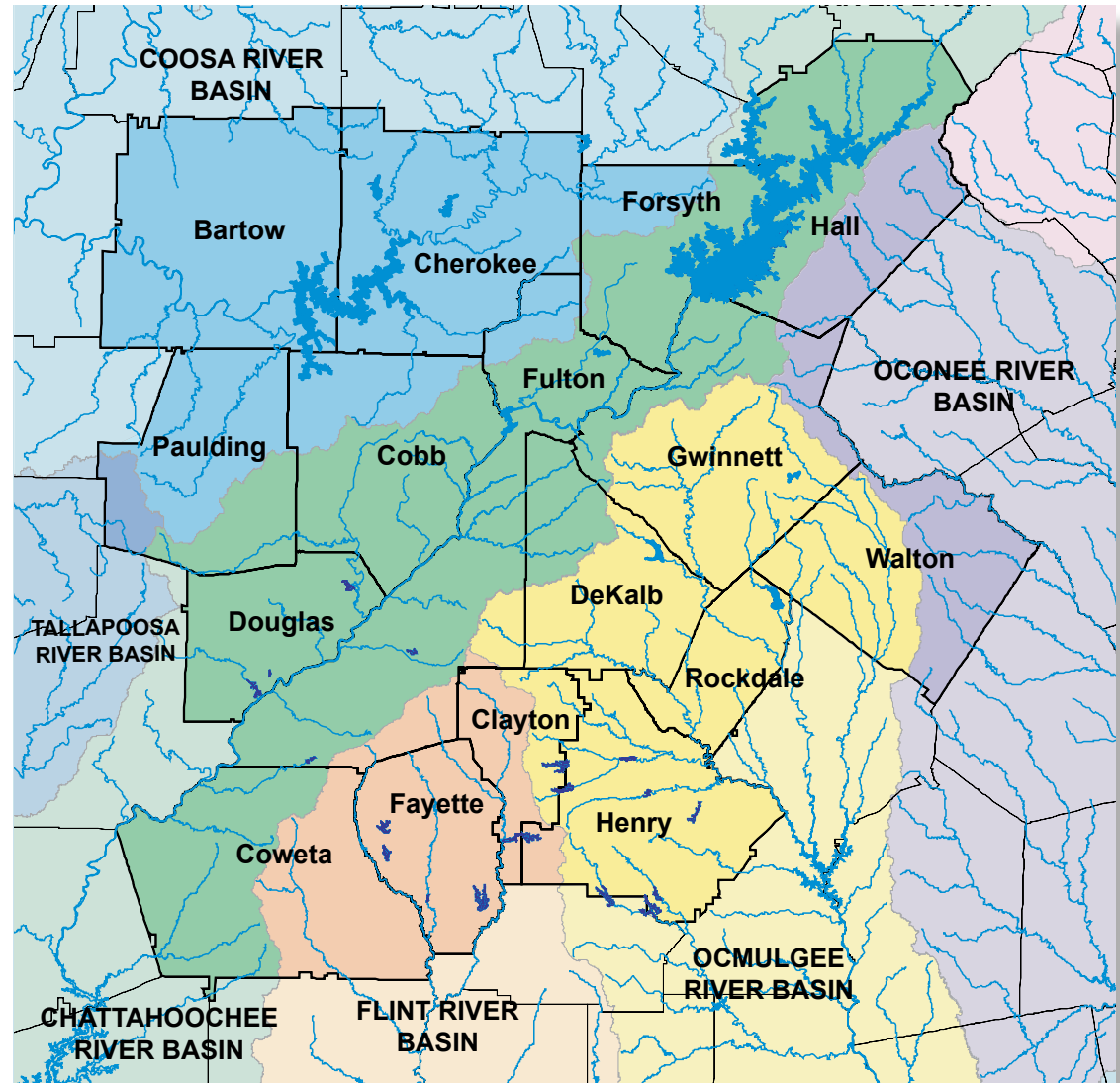
Mr. Birdel Jackson, (District Treasurer) Atlanta, GA

Mr. Gerald Pouncey, Jr., Atlanta, GA

Ms. Suzanne Sitherwood, Atlanta, GA

Mr. Steven Woodruff, Canton, GA

Watersheds of the District



Mission

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the District) is a planning entity dedicated to developing comprehensive regional and watershed-specific water resources plans to be implemented by local governments in the District. These plans will protect water quality and public water supplies, protect recreational values of waters and minimize potential adverse impacts of development on waters in and downstream of the region.

Message from the Chairman

December 2007

This year's unprecedented drought highlights the continuing need for sustainable management of water resources in metropolitan Atlanta. Throughout 2007, the District's 16 counties, 98 cities and 61 water utilities continued to make significant progress towards implementing the numerous water management programs and goals outlined in the District's three long-term plans. Local governments have done the hard work in meeting the region's needs in water supply and water conservation, wastewater management and watershed protection.

With our limited water resources, water conservation is critical to meeting the region's needs, both now and in the future. Local governments and utilities are implementing aggressive water conservation program such as leak detection, conservation pricing and water audits. However, government cannot do this alone. All of us who live and work in the 16 counties must do our part to conserve and use water wisely.

Looking to the future, this fall the District embarked on the first major update of its regional water plans. We will work with our local members and other stakeholders throughout 2008 to ensure metro Atlanta's water future through 2035.

The State of Georgia is poised to adopt a comprehensive statewide water plan. The District is committed to working with the State to ensure that our plans and implementation programs are in full compliance with the statewide plan and all other state laws and guidance.

On behalf of the Governing Board and District staff, we appreciate and look forward to your continued support for the District's efforts.

Sincerely,



Kit Dunlap, Chairman

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Planning for Our Water Future

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was created in 2001 by the Georgia General Assembly to serve as the water planning organization for the 16-county metropolitan Atlanta area. The District was mandated to prepare three regional water resources plans: a water supply and water conservation plan, a wastewater management plan and a District-wide watershed management plan. These plans were completed and adopted by the District in 2003 and have been amended through a series of annual reviews.

The reasons for creating the District are even more valid today than in 2001:

- The recent drought conditions and ongoing tri-state water conflict highlight Metro Atlanta's limited water supply. Long-term water supply planning and coordination are needed to meet the growing needs of the region through optimization of existing water sources, consideration of new reservoirs, water reuse and aggressive water conservation.
- Comprehensive regional wastewater planning and coordination is essential to equitably allocate assimilative capacity, manage growth on septic systems and minimize water quality impacts within and downstream of the District area.
- Effective watershed and stormwater management help to protect and improve water quality and water resources for a growing metropolitan area of almost five million people.
- Local governments need guidance and assistance to implement necessary, but expensive, water resources management programs. These include water conservation, stream buffers, stormwater runoff controls, floodplain management, water quality monitoring and watershed restoration.



Governments, utilities and citizens all have a role to play in conserving and protecting water resources in the District.

Plan Update

The District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Long-term Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan are required to be updated every five years. With the help of the engineering firm Metcalf & Eddy, the first update process is now underway and scheduled for completion in December 2008.

Plan Update Goals and Objectives

Watershed Management Plan

- Address interjurisdictional watershed issues collaboratively among District communities.
- Place a stronger emphasis on the linkages of land use and water quality.
- Recognize the unique nature of each basin within the District and develop basin-specific management measures to address individual challenges or protect exceptional resources.

Wastewater Management Plan

- Update wastewater flow forecasts for the year 2035 based on the new population projections.
- Consider impacts of more stringent lake water quality standards, especially *Chlorophyll a* standards and impacts on treatment standards.
- Consider regional septage disposal locations, especially for outlying counties.

Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan

- Update water demand forecasts for the year 2035 based on new population projections.
- Evaluate the current water conservation actions and update the conservation program elements.
- Balance reliance on federally managed water supply sources with local sources and strong water management programs.



The plan updates will focus on the water, wastewater and watershed protection needs of the District through 2035.

Watershed Management

The overall goal of the District-wide Watershed Management Plan is to meet and maintain water quality standards and designated uses of streams and other waterbodies within the District. The plan includes strategies for effective watershed management and the control of stormwater runoff.

Local governments have made significant progress in implementing specific plan measures, including:

- Requirements for stormwater controls (quality and quantity)
- Stormwater system maintenance programs
- Stream buffer protection
- Future floodplain mapping
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Watershed restoration projects
- Water quality monitoring
- Public awareness and education

Model Stormwater Ordinances

Local ordinances are an important implementation tool for controlling stormwater and nonpoint source pollution. The District continues to provide training classes and individualized technical assistance on the six required model ordinances. A survey of 50 cities and counties demonstrates significant commitment in adopting the model ordinances. Over 75 percent of jurisdictions reported adopting all six model ordinances and 100 percent reported adopting at least four ordinances.

“Stepping Up Your Local Stormwater Management Program”

The District trained over 125 local stormwater program managers and staff during a two-day seminar on local stormwater program development. Co-sponsored by U.S. EPA and several local organizations, the workshop offered assistance on defining and inventorying stormwater management systems, mapping and characterizing MS4 systems, pollution prevention and good housekeeping operations, illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE), public outreach strategies and other requirements of the District-wide Watershed Management Plan.



Watershed management practices help protect the Etowah River and other streams for water supply and recreation.

Wastewater Management

The overall goal of the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan is to meet metro Atlanta's wastewater needs without compromising water quality or downstream water needs. The plan includes a schedule for expanding and upgrading wastewater treatment facilities, strategies to improve collection system maintenance and policies to address septic system management.

Local governments have made significant progress in implementing specific plan measures, including:

- Sewer system inventories
- Sewer rehabilitation
- Grease management
- Septage disposal facilities
- Future sewer area planning
- Sewer flow modeling and capacity certification
- Sewer overflow response
- Septic system critical area identification
- Private wastewater system policy development
- Local wastewater master planning

Septic System Critical Areas

Septic system critical areas are those areas where the risks or potential impacts of septic system failures are higher. All local governments in the District must identify critical areas within their jurisdiction. A survey of 25 cities and counties revealed that areas around lakes or other water features are the most common criteria for identifying critical areas. The majority of jurisdictions reported using multiple criteria to identify potential problem areas for septic systems.

Criteria for identifying critical areas:

- Septic systems in small drinking water supply watersheds
- Septic systems found around lakes or other water features
- Areas with high failure rates
- Areas with limited soil conditions, rock or steep slopes
- Other problem areas as defined by local health departments or jurisdictions

Sewer System Management Seminar

For the second straight year, the District partnered with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and the Georgia Association of Water Professionals to train local officials on sewer system management requirements. The seminar offered assistance on sewer system mapping, grease management, root control, sewer flow monitoring, capacity certification and other requirements found in Section 8 of the District's Long-term Wastewater Management Plan.



Proper design, siting and maintenance of septic systems help protect water quality.

Water Conservation That's Working!

The overall goal of the District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan is to meet the water demands of the region without impacting downstream users. The plan calls for aggressive water conservation.

The District is the only major metropolitan area in the country with more than 100 jurisdictions implementing a comprehensive water conservation program that is required and enforced. Local governments have made significant progress in implementing specific conservation measures called for in the plan. These include:

- Conservation pricing – 98%*
- Water system leak reduction – 94%*
- Sub-metering of new multi-family residential buildings – 75%*
- Residential water audits – 95%*
- Commercial water audits – 73%*
- Distribution of low-flow retrofit kits – 80%*
- Public awareness and education – 98%*

(*percent of District's population covered by policy)



Fixing leaks can lead to both water and financial savings.

Retrofit of Older Plumbing Fixtures

Programs to replace pre-1993 toilets must be in place by 2009. Water providers have the flexibility to choose the type of program that best fits their service area. Five jurisdictions within the District have already rolled out rebate programs. The District is working on a regional toilet rebate program that offers consistency throughout the region and is easy to implement. Participation will be voluntary. Utilities that take part will offer rebates to their customers for installing ultra-low-flush toilets (ULFT) or high-efficiency toilets (HET).

Assessing and Reducing Water System Leakage

Reducing system leakage and unbilled water can yield significant water savings for the metro area. This year the District trained 50 water utility professionals how to assess their system leakage using the new American Water Works Association Water Audit Software. Local water utilities shared professional experiences and discussed new best management practices to cut overall water system losses. Ninety-four percent of the District population is now served by a water utility with an on-going leak detection program.



Responding to Drought

Unprecedented drought has affected the entire District area and much of the Southeast this year. In October, Governor Perdue ordered all water utilities and permit holders to reduce water use by 10 percent. Local governments and citizens responded quickly and positively to this call for more stringent water conservation. District utilities have used varied approaches for meeting this conservation goal:

- Drought surcharges for highest water users
- Limits on commercial uses
- Additional restrictions on outdoor water use
- Reduced fire hydrant usage
- Moratoriums on rezoning
- Special education efforts such as workshops for large commercial customers

Short-term actions will meet immediate water supply needs, but emphasis is still needed on long-term water supply planning and coordination. As the District updates its Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan, it is looking at additional conservation measures or ways to strengthen and enhance the ones included in the current plan.



The drought is impacting recreational and economic activities at Lake Lanier.

Education and Public Awareness

Every year the District conducts a multi-faceted media campaign, community workshops, educational materials and student programs to achieve its goal of reaching 75-90 percent of metro residents with messages about pollution prevention and water conservation. This was another successful year in helping educate metro residents about the importance of protecting and conserving water resources.

2007 Media Campaign

Clean Water Campaign and Water Use It Wisely tips were seen and heard on television, radio and in movie theatres in 2007. The Water District partnered with WXIA Channel 11 for the television advertising campaign. Water pollution prevention and water conservation public service announcements aired over 750 times on three television stations. Over 200 Clean Water Campaign and Water Use It Wisely tips were aired during radio traffic reports on over 25 metro-area radio stations for 8 weeks. PSAs were shown in 15 movie theatres and over 250 screens for 12 weeks.



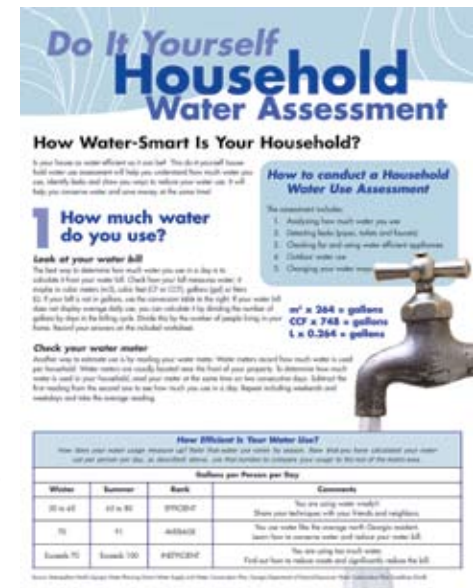
WXIA Meteorologist Paul Ossmann shared tips on water conservation with TV viewers throughout the District.

Materials

The Water District distributed nearly 150,000 brochures to local governments and citizens in 2007.

2007 Most Requested Materials

- Septic Tank Maintenance Brochure
- Menu for a Cleaner Environment
- Landscape Irrigation Watering Guide
- Maintenance Guide for Irrigation Systems
- Do-It-Yourself Household Water Assessment



The Do-It-Yourself Household Water Assessment is available online at www.northgeorgiawater.org.

Water Conservation Education

The drought has heightened water conservation efforts by local governments and citizens alike. In the past two years more than 80,000 *Do-It-Yourself Household Water Assessments* have been distributed. This tool helps homeowners calculate water use and includes tips for using water more efficiently. Ninety-eight percent of the District population is served by a water utility that offers water conservation education and outreach programs

2007 Essay Contest

The District received over 200 submissions from middle school students in 14 counties for the 2007 Clean Water Campaign/Water Use It Wisely Essay Contest. Middle school students wrote creative essays on ways to prevent water pollution and conserve water. Emily Ruggles of Webb Bridge Middle School in Fulton County was the 2007 District-wide winner.

Workshops

Local governments shared Clean Water Campaign messages with citizens during a number of local workshops. Citizens learned from local experts about:

- Composting
- Grease Management
- Lawn Care
- Rain Barrels
- Rain Gardens
- Septic System Maintenance
- U-Fix It Workshop
- Water Wise Household
- Xeriscaping



Emily Ruggles of Webb Bridge Middle School in Fulton County was the 2007 District-wide winner.

Plan Implementation

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is charged with enforcing local government compliance with the three Water District plans. When a local government seeks a new or modified permit for water withdrawal, wastewater discharge or municipal stormwater, or uses state funds for water related projects, EPD completes a detailed audit of programs and policies required by the plans. EPD has dedicated staff to complete the audits and works closely with the Water District to provide technical assistance to local governments in the metro area.

Completed Audits (As of December 1, 2007)

Bartow County
Braselton
Canton
Cherokee County
Cherokee County Water &
Sewerage Authority
Cobb County – Marietta
Water Authority
Cobb County
Conyers
Coweta County
Cumming
Dallas

Douglas County
Douglasville
Douglasville – Douglas County
Water & Sewer Authority
Emerson
Fayette County
Fayetteville
Forsyth County
Fulton County
Gainesville
Gwinnett County
Hall County
Hampton

Henry County
Henry County Water &
Sewerage Authority
Lawrenceville
Locust Grove
Milton
Newnan/Newnan Utilities
Paulding County
Peachtree City
Rockdale County
Sandy Springs
Stockbridge

Audits In Process

Atlanta
Berkeley Lake
Buford
Cartersville
DeKalb County
Duluth
Flowery Branch
Gillsville

Grantville
Hiram
Holly Springs
John's Creek
Loganville
Lula
McDonough
Monroe

Mountain Park
Oakwood
Social Circle
Tyrone
Villa Rica
Walton County
Woodstock

Local Implementation Projects

Since the adoption of its first plans four short years ago, the District has made a significant difference in proactively managing metro Atlanta's water resources. Local governments and utilities are putting the District plans into action with positive results.



Rain gardens treat stormwater and provide drought-resistant landscaping in the City of Alpharetta.

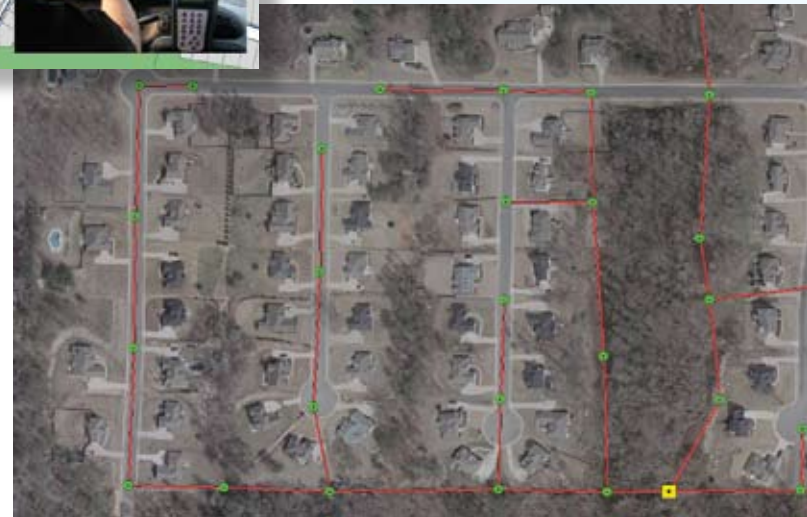
Henry County Water and Sewerage Authority uses GIS to help identify system leaks in need of repair.



Coweta County opened its first water treatment plant in 2007 to help provide water to the county's 22,000 customers.



More than 30 jurisdictions use stenciling or curb markers to educate the public about stormdrains and pollution prevention.



The City of Fayetteville mapped and inventoried the city's entire sewer system using new GIS technology.

Financials

The District operates on a calendar year budget. Funding for the District’s 2007 work came primarily from local government dues (\$1,192,399) and the State of Georgia (\$250,000). Local government dues were \$0.30 per capita for 2007.

Below is an accounting of funds received and expended as of November 28, 2007. This accounting includes contract obligations and is subject to adjustments after year-end close and audits.

2007 Revenues

State Grants	\$250,000
Local Dues	\$1,192,399
General Fund Carryover	\$150,991
Interest Income	\$60,000
District Special Projects Revenue	\$122,000
Misc. (meeting fees, sponsorships)	\$20,000
Total Revenues	\$1,795,390

2007 Expenses

Chairman’s Allowance	\$3,000
District Special Projects	\$122,000
Public Education	\$211,118
Salaries	\$286,105
Fringe Benefits	\$168,802
Contracts - Plan Updates	\$620,000
Overhead	\$226,163
Miscellaneous Operating	\$97,646
Total Expenses	\$1,734,834

Financial Recommendations for 2008

The Board has adopted a budget of \$1,904,399 for 2008 to continue the District’s multi-year implementation tasks and to complete the required plan updates. Local government dues will remain at \$0.30 per capita for 2008. The Board has also requested \$550,000 in the FY 2009 Georgia state budget for the District’s 2008 work.

Acknowledgements

The general purposes of the District are to establish policy, create plans and promote intergovernmental coordination of water issues. This work could not be done without the dedication of many organizations and individuals. The District especially thanks members of the Technical Coordinating Committee and the Basin Advisory Council for their input and commitment to the District planning process.



BAC members discuss water issues at Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County.



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