

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

# **2008 Activities & Progress Report**



## 2008 Board Members

### Elected Officials

City of Atlanta – *Hon. Shirley Franklin\**  
Bartow County – *Hon. Clarence Brown*  
Cherokee County – *Hon. Rick Roberts*  
(City of Ball Ground)  
Clayton County – *Hon. Eldrin Bell\**  
Cobb County – *Hon. Sam Olens*  
(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*

### Citizen Members

*William Thomas Craig* – Covington  
*Bradley N. Currey, Jr.* – Atlanta  
*Kit L. Dunlap* – Gainesville (Chairman)\*  
*Bob Fountain* – Macon  
*Gardiner W. Garrard, Jr.* – Columbus\*  
*Birdel Jackson* – Atlanta (Treasurer)\*  
*Katie Kirkpatrick* – Atlanta  
*Gerald Pouncey, Jr.* – Atlanta  
*Suzanne Sitherwood* – Atlanta  
*Steven Woodruff* – Canton\*

\*Executive Committee

December 2008

In only five short years, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has made tremendous progress in managing and protecting our water resources. Prior to 2003 and the adoption of the Metro Water District plans, there were no comprehensive, metro-wide watershed, water supply or wastewater management programs in the metro area.

Today, we lead the nation. No other region in the country brings together as many different jurisdictions and water systems to develop and implement water management plans that are enforced by an outside agency.

We are beginning to see results towards our long-term goals. Progress is happening because local governments and water and wastewater utilities are committed to making necessary political and financial investments in the region's water future.

While we continued to implement the provisions of the 2003 plans, we also continued working on the first major update to the plans. The update process has allowed us to assess progress and revise elements that will make the revised plans even more effective in managing our water resources. Hundreds of local government officials and stakeholders engaged in this comprehensive water planning process. The updated Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Long-term Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan will be adopted in early 2009.

2008 has been a pivotal year for water resources management in Georgia. The General Assembly approved the first statewide water plan, 10 new regional water planning councils were formed and Georgia EPD began comprehensive resource assessments of the state's rivers and streams. Although the Metro Water District is governed under different legislation from the new regional councils, our plans will fully comply with the requirements of the Statewide Water Plan.

Comprehensive, coordinated and continuing water management planning is vital to our economic future and quality of life. The Metro Water District and its participating local governments and water systems pledge to continue to work hard to meet the needs of our citizens while we strive to address the concerns of downstream communities and protect rivers, streams and lakes and the aquatic life that depends on them.

Sincerely,

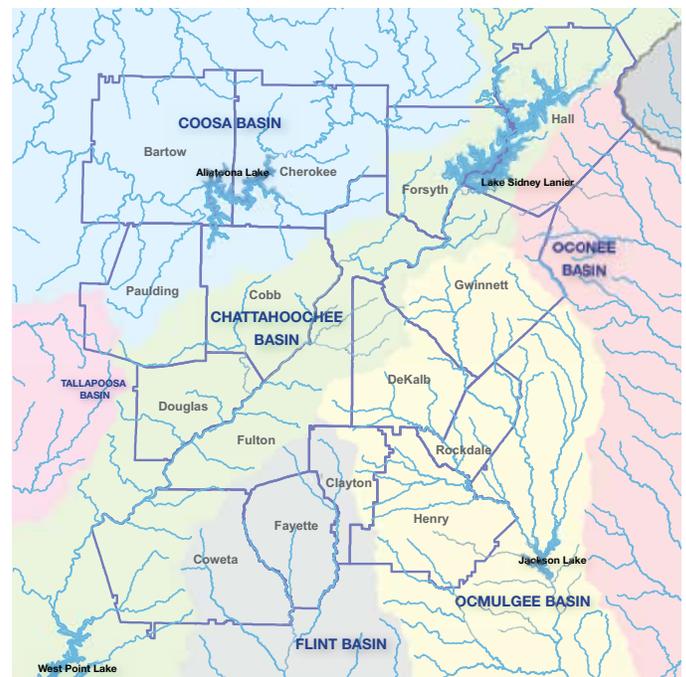
Kit Dunlap, Chairman

# About the Metro Water District

Since 2001 the Metro Water District has worked collectively with hundreds of stakeholders to manage the region's water resources. Under the direction of the Governing Board, Technical Coordinating Committee and Basin Advisory Councils, the Metro Water District remains committed to its central mission – the development of comprehensive regional water resources plans that protect water quality and water supply in and downstream of the region, protect recreational values of the waters in and downstream of the region and minimize potential adverse impacts of development on waters in and downstream of the region.

**Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** – Local water, wastewater and stormwater officials provide technical guidance in the areas of stormwater management, wastewater and septic systems management, and water supply and water conservation.

**Basin Advisory Councils (BACs)** – Individuals representing a wide variety of public interests advise on the development and implementation of plans and policies and provide local feedback on water management issues affecting six basins: Chattahoochee, Etowah, Flint, Lake Lanier, Ocmulgee and Oconee.



**By the Numbers:** 15 counties, 92 cities, 6 river basins, over 4,800 square miles, 4.8 million residents, three comprehensive plans: Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Long-term Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan.



## Plan Update

The Metro Water District marked an important milestone in 2008 by completing the technical work for the first updates to its three integrated water resources plans. While calling for consistent water management policies throughout the 15 counties, the updated plans will allow for local flexibility and basin-specific issues. Drafts of the updated plans were released for public comment on December 15, 2008. The board will vote on the final plans in early 2009.

## Stakeholder Involvement

- 8 rounds of Basin Advisory Council meetings
- 25 Technical Coordinating Committee subcommittee meetings
- 7 Governing Board presentations
- Comment periods for each technical analysis and preliminary draft plans
- 45-day public comment period began December 15, 2008

## Plan Compliance

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is charged with enforcing the requirements of the Metro Water District plans. EPD audits local governments for compliance with the plans when they apply for new or modified permits for water withdrawal, wastewater discharge or stormwater, or when they use state funds for water related projects.

## 2008 Audits

### Completed by December 1, 2008:

Buford	Henry County WSA	McDonough	Paulding County
Dacula	Lawrenceville	Oakwood	Roswell
Grayson	Lula	Palmetto	Villa Rica
Henry County			

### In Progress as of December 1, 2008

Acworth	College Park	Hapeville	Norcross
Atlanta	Decatur	Jonesboro	Pinelake
Austell	DeKalb County	Kennesaw	Riverdale
Avondale Estates	Doraville	Kingston	Smyrna
Berkeley Lake	Duluth	Lake City	Snellville
Chamblee	East Point	Lilburn	Sugar Hill
Clayton County	Fairburn	Lovejoy	Suwanee
Clayton County Water Authority	Forest Park	Marietta	Union City
Cobb County	Fulton County	Morrow	
	Gwinnett County	Mountain Park	



# Water Supply & Conservation

Long before the multi-year drought in North Georgia came to dominate discussions about water, the Metro Water District put in place a menu of aggressive long-term water conservation measures. The Metro Water District's water conservation program is one of the most comprehensive programs in the country that apply uniformly to so many local water providers. Metro Water District governments have made substantial investments in securing our water supplies for the future.

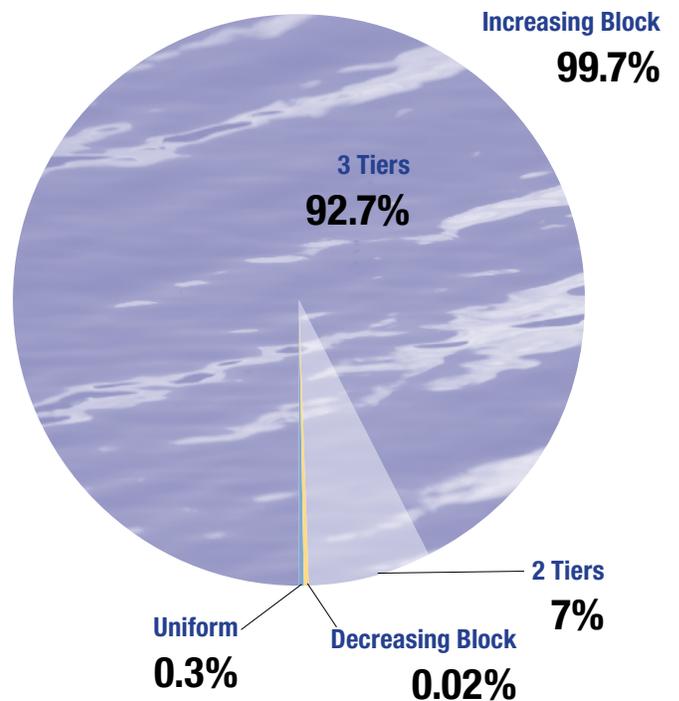
## Conservation Pricing

Conservation pricing structures are tiered rate systems where the more water used, the higher the price. This type of rate system was uncommon in the Metro Water District before being required by the 2003 Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan. Now more than 99 percent of the population is subject to increasing block or tiered rates.

## Toilet Rebates

Replacing older, inefficient toilets with ultra low flow and high efficiency toilets will help the Metro Water District meet its water conservation targets, and rebates are an effective way to

encourage water customers to replace old inefficient toilets. The Metro Water District made significant progress in implementing this water conservation measure in 2008.



Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District 2008 Water and Wastewater Rate Survey

Twenty-four water providers now offer toilet rebates to eligible customers, either directly or as part of the Metro Water District's regional toilet rebate program. The rebates issued in 2008 for all rebate programs total over 15,000 toilets.

## Water Providers with Toilet Rebate Programs

- City of Atlanta Watershed Department
- City of Austell
- City of Ball Ground
- City of Cartersville
- Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority
- Clayton County Water Authority
- Cobb County Water System
- Coweta County Water and Sewerage Authority
- City of Dallas
- DeKalb County Department of Watershed Management
- City of East Point
- City of Emerson
- City of Fairburn
- Fayette County Water System
- Fulton County Department of Public Works
- City of Gainesville
- Gwinnett County Water Resources
- City of Hapeville
- Henry County Water and Sewerage Authority
- City of Marietta
- City of McDonough
- Paulding County Water Department
- City of Roswell
- City of Smyrna

## Drought Management

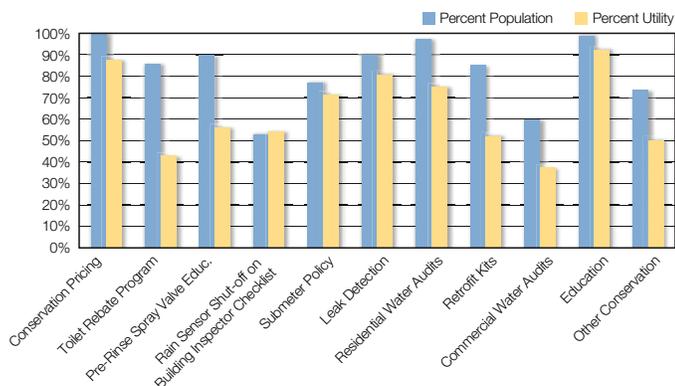
The Metro Water District's water conservation program outlines long-term measures designed to produce water savings over the life of the plan. Drought management is the responsibility of Georgia EPD. Since 2006 EPD has implemented increasingly protective short-term conservation initiatives to protect water resources in Georgia, particularly those areas most affected by the drought.

In October 2007 Governor Perdue called for water utilities in North Georgia to reduce their water withdrawals by 10 percent and local water providers have responded. Many have implemented short-term water saving actions such as drought surcharges; they have stepped up enforcement of outdoor water use restrictions and initiated special outreach efforts to manage water resources during the ongoing drought. These efforts helped secure immediate water use needs without interrupting service or compromising access to water for emergency uses.

The ongoing drought also heightened the need for more sustainable operations of federal reservoirs in the region. The Metro Water District held meetings and sent comment letters to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in response to emergency drought operations and the revised interim operations plan for lakes Lanier and Allatoona. The governing board continues to track work to update the Water Control Plans for the reservoirs and passed a resolution encouraging reduced flows from Lake Lanier.



## Summary of District's Water Conservation Measures



Source: 2008 Plan Implementation Survey as reported by 51 water providers serving 97% of the regional population



# Wastewater Management

Wastewater providers are helping protect water quality in the region by implementing proactive management measures outlined in the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan. These measures include implementing sewer system inspection and maintenance elements, developing and updating local wastewater master plans, and planning for and managing septic and decentralized systems.

## Sewer System Inspection and Maintenance Elements

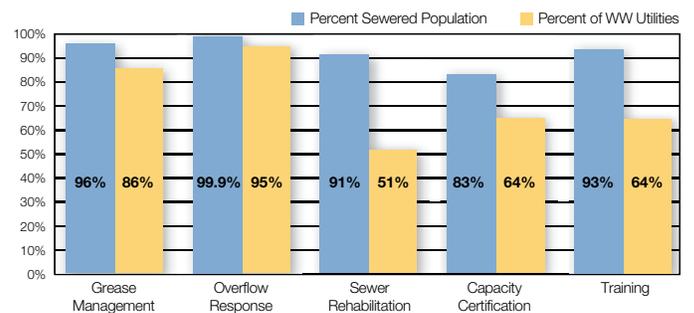
Wastewater providers must spend significant resources to inspect and maintain infrastructure so that the system will perform properly. Of those jurisdictions responding to the survey, 90 percent have implemented a sewer system inspection and maintenance program.

## Decentralized Wastewater Systems and Septic Systems Management

In areas of the Metro Water District that are not served by sewers, local governments have made equal commitments to properly managing septic systems. Proactive management measures and education programs on proper care of septic

systems help prevent water quality impacts from this type of wastewater treatment.

### Sewer System Inspection and Maintenance Elements 2008 Survey Responses – % “Yes”



Source: 2008 Plan Implementation Survey as reported by 46 wastewater providers serving 95% of the sewered population.

Septic System Measures	% Population Affected
Identified Critical Areas	80
Accept septage at wastewater treatment plants	91
Adopted policy for private wastewater systems	92

Source: 2008 Plan Implementation Survey as reported by 46 wastewater providers



# Watershed Management

While water conservation has attracted most of the attention in recent years, one of the principal drivers for the creation of the Metro Water District in 2001 was to reduce the negative impacts of development on metro area rivers, streams and lakes. Since the adoption of the Metro Water District's initial Watershed Management Plan in 2003, local governments have made considerable strides in putting in place policies and practices that protect water bodies in the metro area.

## Model Ordinances

Stormwater and watershed protection ordinances play an important role in reducing the impacts of uncontrolled stormwater runoff and human activities on the Metro Water District's rivers and streams. Local jurisdictions have adopted and are actively implementing these model ordinances:

**Post-Development Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment** – 100% adoption rate. 93% have incorporated the ordinance requirements into their local development review process and over 64% have adopted procedures for long-term maintenance of new stormwater facilities.

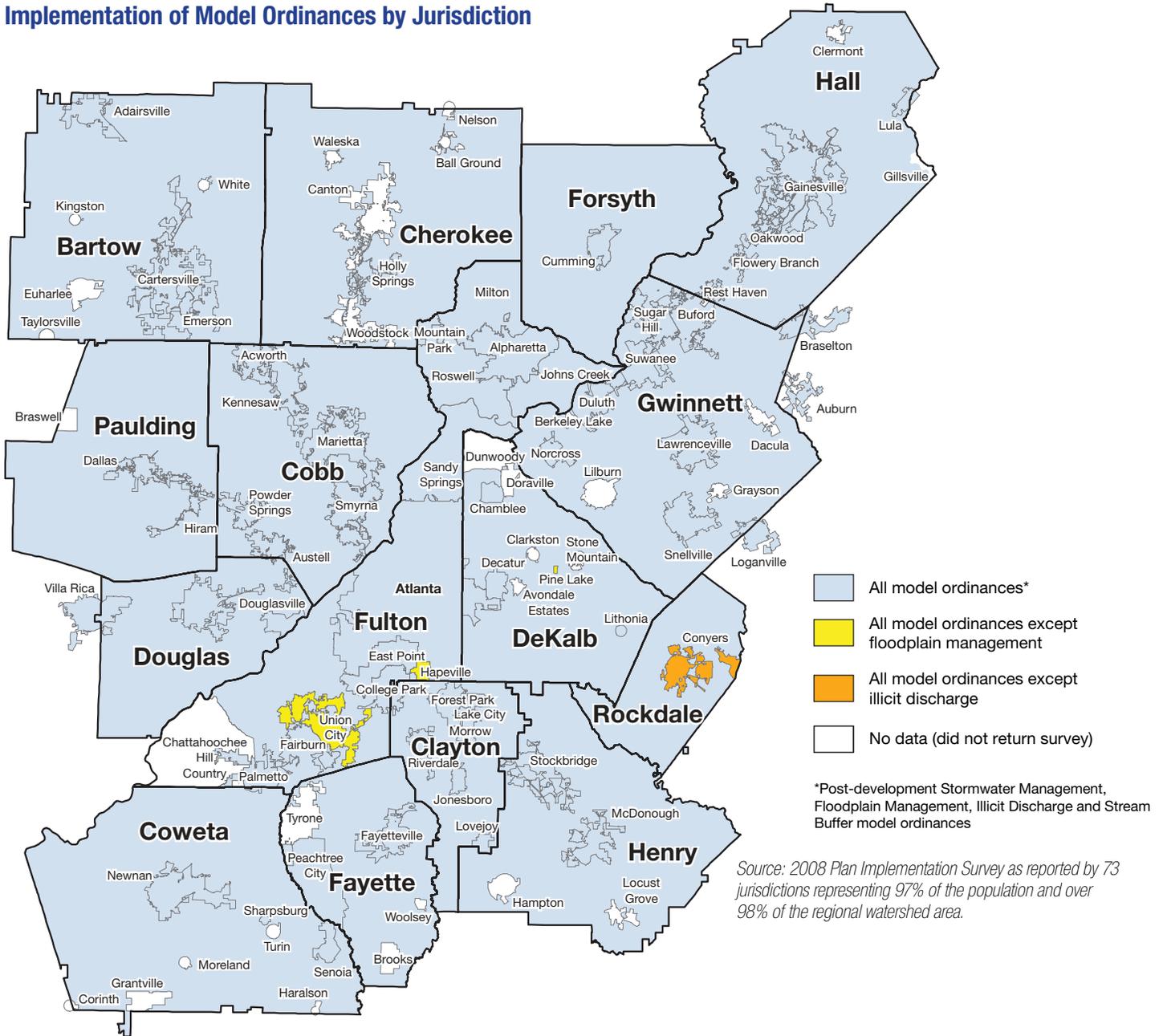
**Stream Buffer Protection** – 100% adoption rate. Seven jurisdictions have adopted stream buffer requirements that exceed the model ordinance.

**Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection** – 98% adoption rate. 80% have an active program for eliminating illicit discharges and illegal connections.



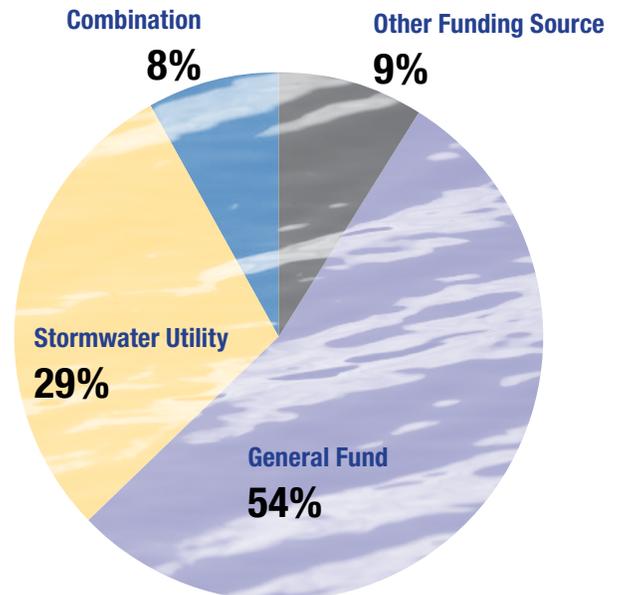
**Floodplain Management / Flood Damage Prevention** – 85% adoption rate. 74% have completed or have efforts underway to map future-conditions floodplains to support implementation of the ordinance.

## Implementation of Model Ordinances by Jurisdiction



## Program Funding

The majority of jurisdictions in the Metro Water District fund their stormwater and watershed management programs from their general fund. However, a growing number of communities are finding benefits from implementing a stormwater utility. Nearly one-third of jurisdictions in the Metro Water District now use funds generated from a stormwater utility or enterprise fund to finance stormwater programs and activities. A stormwater utility provides a community with a dedicated funding source, where fees are based on a measure of impact or "use" of the stormwater system.





# Education and Public Awareness

Education activities at the regional and local level are important in raising public awareness of water issues. The Metro Water District continues to work closely with local partners to implement education and outreach programs to teach citizens about ways to prevent water pollution and conserve water.

## Materials and Brochures

The Metro Water District is proud to offer over 20 brochures on a variety of pollution prevention and water conservation topics. Over 38,350 brochures were distributed in 2008 to member local governments and other stakeholders.

## Middle School Essay Contest

Over 200 students from 14 counties submitted creative essays on ways to prevent water pollution and conserve water as part of the Metro Water District's annual essay contest for middle school students. Mariah Brown from Henderson Middle School in DeKalb County was the 2008 District-wide winner.

## Workshops

Workshops and seminars are an effective way to reach citizens with pollution prevention and water conservation messages. Eighty percent of jurisdictions offered such education programs this year, including 16 communities who hosted Clean Water Campaign workshops that were developed as part of the Metro Water District's regional education program.

## 2008 Clean Water Campaign Workshops Topics

- Rain Garden
- Septic Maintenance
- Water Smart
- Rain Barrel
- Lawn Care and Integrated Pest Management
- Xeriscaping
- Tree Planting and Care



# 2008 Financials

The Metro Water District operates on a calendar year budget, with the majority of revenues coming from local government dues (\$1,192,397) and the State of Georgia (\$350,000). Local government dues were \$0.30 per capita for 2008.

Below is a review of revenues and expenses. This accounting includes contract obligations and is subject to adjustments after fiscal year-end close and independent audit.

## Financial Recommendations for 2009

The governing board has adopted a budget of \$1,191,932 for 2009, with the majority of revenues coming from local government dues (\$794,932) and the State of Georgia (\$250,000). Local government dues will be lowered to \$0.20 per capita for 2009.

### Revenues

State Funds . . . . .	\$350,000
Local Dues . . . . .	\$1,192,397
General Fund Carryover . . . . .	\$122,131
Interest Income . . . . .	\$33,000
District Special Projects Revenue. . . . .	\$122,000
Plan Update Obligated 2007 Carry Over . . . . .	\$600,104
Miscellaneous (meeting and other fees) . . . . .	\$25,000
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$2,444,632</b>

### Expenses

Chairman's Allowance . . . . .	\$3,000
District Special Projects. . . . .	\$122,000
Public Education . . . . .	\$25,000
Salaries . . . . .	\$296,828
Fringe Benefits . . . . .	\$175,131
Contracts – Plan Updates . . . . .	\$1,038,000
Overhead . . . . .	\$245,424
Miscellaneous Operating . . . . .	\$70,000
Plan Update Expenses Deferred to 2009 . . . . .	\$267,000
General Fund Carryover . . . . .	\$202,249
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$2,444,632</b>



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