

By Vikrant Ravi
Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers
DeKalb County

Georgians Right To Abundant and Pure Water Supply

Water is an essential resource of every living creature on this earth and has the power to rejuvenate the ecosystem which all the life depends on. About 70% of the oxygen we breathe comes from the phytoplankton which survives in the ocean water. Water is a finite natural resource where most of the water on earth is salt water and the rest of the water is either frozen or underground. Only 1% of water or less is available for human use. Water is not only used for drinking and cooking, but is also used in agriculture, industry, and electricity. There are many countries in the world that have water scarcity and water needs to be transported from long distances. It is very important that we conserve the water and make sure we are not polluting it or wasting it.

The Chattahoochee River Basin is the main water resource that provides drinking water supply to more than 1/3 of Georgia's population. Originating in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Chattahoochee River is one of the largest river serving 29 cities and 7 counties within the district portion of the Upper Chattahoochee River Basin. The word "Chattahoochee" is a Creek Indian word that means "A River of Painted Rocks." This river supplies 70% of Metro Atlanta's drinking water, which is like more than 300 million gallons of water per day. It runs for 434 miles in total, before emptying in to the Gulf of Mexico. The Chattahoochee River not only provides drinking water but is also a critical source of hydroelectric power. Thirteen dams constructed along this river help generate hydropower and electricity for 16 hydro power plants in the metro Atlanta region. This river played an important role in the Civil War and is one of the reasons for the industrial development in Georgia. Many people have lived beside this river for thousands of years, making this river an important source of drinking water, food and transportation.

Atlanta's growing population and industry increased the need for fresh water, also creating potential risks to both humans and wildlife. Most of this is because of the pollution that comes from the eroded soil from construction, industrial waste, and stormwater. In addition to this, human actions such as not turning off the faucets when not in use, improper use of power, not using water efficient appliances, and throwing trash into sinks cause contamination. We need to be aware of our water usage so that we don't dry out this major river.

Protecting and preserving the Chattahoochee River is every Georgian's responsibility. Last year, the Water Resources and Development act was approved to protect the Chattahoochee River system. This program is to improve water quality, restore the ecosystems

and protect the public works along the river. Pure and abundant water is essential for building a healthy environment. Healthy and happy people always make a happy society.