



2025 Activities & Progress Report

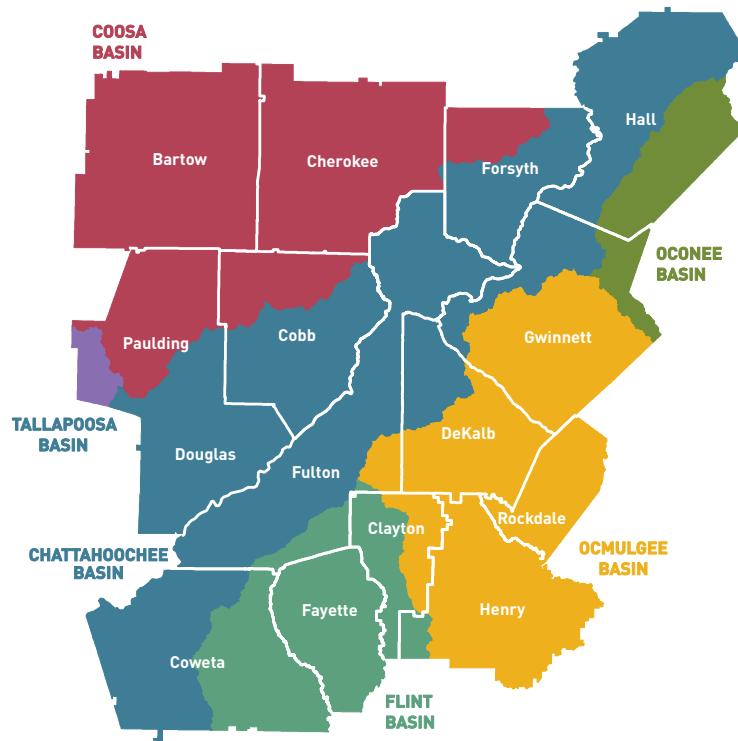
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

About the District

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the Metro Water District Water Planning 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

Ms. Pamela Burnett
Mr. Albert Edwards
Dr. Ben Jordan
Ms. Sara Ray

Mr. Darrell Rochester
Mr. Gerald Pouncey
Mr. Tim Thoms
Mr. Dave William

2025 Governing Board Members Elected Officials

Mr. Glenn Page
Chair

Chairwoman Nicole Love Hendrickson
Vice Chair - Gwinnett County Board Member

Dr. Mark Berry
Secretary / Treasurer

Mayor Andre Dickens
City of Atlanta Board Member

Commissioner Steve Taylor
Bartow County Board Member

Chairman Harry Johnston
Cherokee County Board Member

Chairwoman Alieka Anderson-Henry
Clayton County Board Member

Chairwoman Lisa Cupid
Cobb County Board Member

Chairman Bill McKenzie
Coweta County Board Member

CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
DeKalb County Board Member

Chairman Lee Hearn
Fayette County Board Member

Chairman Alfred John
Forsyth County Board Member

Chairman Robb Pitts
Fulton County Board Member

Chairman David Gibbs
Hall County Board Member

Chair Carlotta Harrell
Henry County Board Member

Chairman Tim Estes
Paulding County Board Member

Chair JaNice Van Ness
Rockdale County Board Member

A Letter from Our Chairman

Reflections on Legacy and Progress

As the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District approaches its 25th anniversary next year, I've been reflecting on how far we've come while preparing for what lies ahead. For nearly a quarter century, the District's foundation of collaboration and science-based planning has guided one of the nation's fastest-growing regions through droughts, floods, and growth. That same foundation continues to drive innovation, strengthen resilience, and ensure reliable water resources for generations to come.

Overcoming Challenges

When I began this role in 2020 – at the start of a new decade and amid a global pandemic filled with uncertainty – the future felt unpredictable. Yet since then, I've seen remarkable progress and partnership across our 15-county region. Together, we've strengthened coordination among local governments, utilities, and agencies to support a sustainable water future for millions of Georgians. We completed and are implementing a new five-year regional plan and began work on the next update for 2028. It has been an honor to serve during this pivotal chapter and help guide so much progress.

The benefits of collaboration were evident earlier this year as a decades-long tri-state water litigation reached resolution. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' adoption of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint settlement agreement officially ended Georgia's dispute with Alabama – marking a new era of cooperation across shared river basins and showing what's possible when stakeholders work together toward common goals.

Planning for Resilience

This year, the rapid rise of data-center development across metro Atlanta positioned the District to guide and encourage dialogue and thoughtful planning among utilities, developers, and local leaders to balance economic growth with sustainable water and energy use. We also advanced collaborative efforts to improve stormwater management through forums convening regional planners, utilities, and developers to identify solutions for managing stormwater, financing infrastructure, and updating policy.

The completion of our Climate Resilience Study Update showcased how communities are strengthening

infrastructure and operations to withstand more extreme weather – an increasing priority as over the past decade (2015–2025), we've experienced the hottest temperatures on record and flood events have been trending up. We commend communities like DeKalb County for making tough but necessary infrastructure investments now, recognizing that the costs will only grow with time. As we continue our next five-year planning process, addressing our region's aging and at-risk water systems will be essential to maintain reliability, protect resources and support prosperity.

Advancing Efficiency

In August, the District was recognized by the Alliance for Water Efficiency as its Affiliate Member of the Year, honoring our leadership in water efficiency and education. 2025 marked the last year of our successful toilet rebate program. Since 2008, the program resulted in nearly 155,000 inefficient toilets being replaced with high-efficiency models. Our newer smart leak detection rebate program, launched in 2022, also ended in December. The program helped about 100 homeowners improve leak detection and prevent water loss.

As drought-like conditions and declining reservoir levels have returned in recent months, we're reminded that conservation must remain a high priority to protect metro Atlanta's water future.

Looking Ahead with Gratitude and Optimism

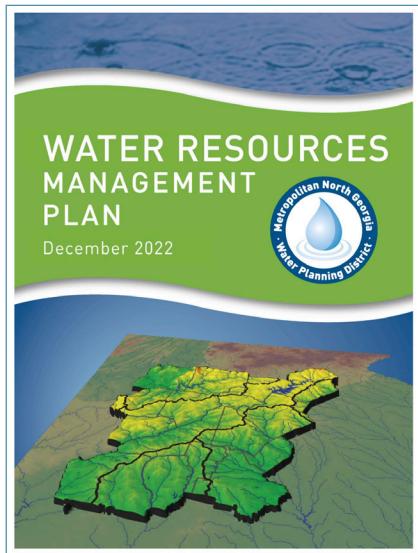
The past six years have reaffirmed that collaboration is the key to progress. I'm deeply grateful to my colleagues on the Governing Board, our Basin Advisory Council members, and the dedicated staff whose expertise drives our important work. As I pass the baton, I do so with confidence that the District's next chapter will build on its legacy of partnership, sound science, and a shared vision for a thriving, water-secure region.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. M. Page".

Chairman Glenn Page

Flowing Forward Together: Regional Planning in Action

Updating the Five-Year Water Resources Management Plan



The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has begun the planning process for the next five-year Water Resources Management Plan. That process started with seeking input from partnering communities across the region, focusing initially on collecting comments and suggestions on *Section 2: Planning Principles and Management Challenges* from the 2022 Plan. The District anticipates new and continued focus on aging infrastructure, future water demands, wastewater generation and stormwater forecasts to be important components of the Plan update discussions.

Technical Assistance Program (TAP)



The District's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) offered technical and implementation support for our member jurisdictions across a range of water resources planning areas to ensure quality and effective implementation of the current regional plan.

Over the past year, our TAP team responded quickly to the needs of our partners, often reaching out within a day of officials receiving audit letters from the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD). In total, 13 partners received assistance, with significant staff time dedicated to supporting them through the EPD audit process.

Flowing Forward Together: Regional Planning in Action

Resilience Planning

Climate change is increasing extreme weather events, including billion-dollar disasters like Hurricane Helene in September 2024. To update the District's 2015 Utility Climate Resiliency Study, our staff engaged with key stakeholders throughout the year to better understand local impacts and partner needs to enable water utilities to plan and bounce back more quickly from natural disasters and future climate variability. Examples include:



June 2025 Live Mentimeter Survey:

Sixty participants at the TCC meeting shared input to gauge utility staff's understanding of resilience, the impacts they are seeing, and actions taken in their organizations.

Summer–Fall 2025 One-on-One Interviews:

Seven utilities and local governments participated in-depth interviews to share experiences, needs, and lessons learned for peer guidance. Interviewees included county COOs, utility directors, emergency management and resilience managers, treatment plant superintendents, communications specialists, regulatory compliance coordinators, stormwater managers, and capital planning managers.

October 2025 Virtual Focus Group:

Twenty-six participants from 11 jurisdictions joined a multi-jurisdictional peer learning session to review draft recommendations for a guidance document aimed at enhancing the 2015 study to highlight clearer and more actionable near-term recommendations.

Flowing Forward Together: Regional Planning in Action

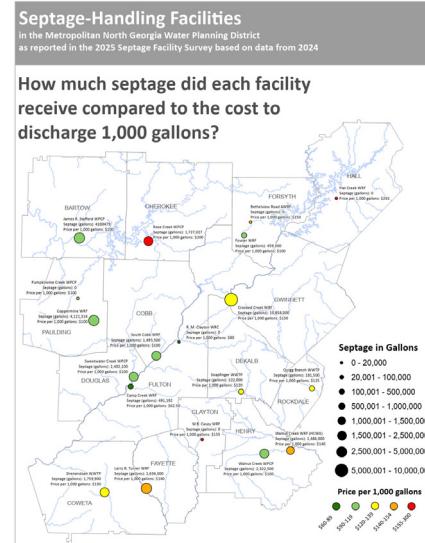
District Programming in 2025



DON'T FORGET
Get Your Rebate Today

Apply today for a rebate on an Ultra-High Efficiency Toilet or Smart Leak Detector! Scan here to see additional program and eligibility requirements - and be sure to look for the WaterSense logo when you buy!

Apply by Dec. 15, 2025.
Learn more at northgeorgiawater.org



Stormwater Planning

This year, the District advanced key initiatives to support regional stormwater planning and management. A new Model Policy on Stormwater Management Feasibility for Public Linear Transportation Projects was developed to help local governments establish clear, consistent criteria for managing stormwater along roads and other public transportation corridors.

The District also received Section 319(h) grant funding from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to explore the feasibility of a Regional Stormwater Infrastructure Map. This initial effort will focus on gathering data and assessing whether such a regional map — showing a connected view of stormwater systems across the 15-county area — is achievable and useful for future planning. If found viable, the project could lay the groundwork for future tools that enhance regional stormwater management and water quality efforts.

Rebate Programs Sunset

In December 2025, the District's toilet and smart leak detector rebate programs came to a close, wrapping up an incredibly successful chapter in our region's water conservation journey. Since the launch of the Toilet Rebate Program in 2008, more than 155,000 older, inefficient toilets have been replaced with low-flow, high-efficiency models — saving as much as 2.4 gallons with every flush. Building on the success of this program, the District launched its Smart Leak Detection Rebate Program in 2022. Nearly 100 residents in the region received rebates for installing these devices to help identify and stop costly and potentially damaging leaks on their property.

Septic Survey

Since 2014, the District has tracked septage volumes and rates by county to monitor disposal trends and encourage proper management. This effort, part of the Water Resources Management Plan, helps identify where septage is being received and supports strategies to reduce illegal dumping.

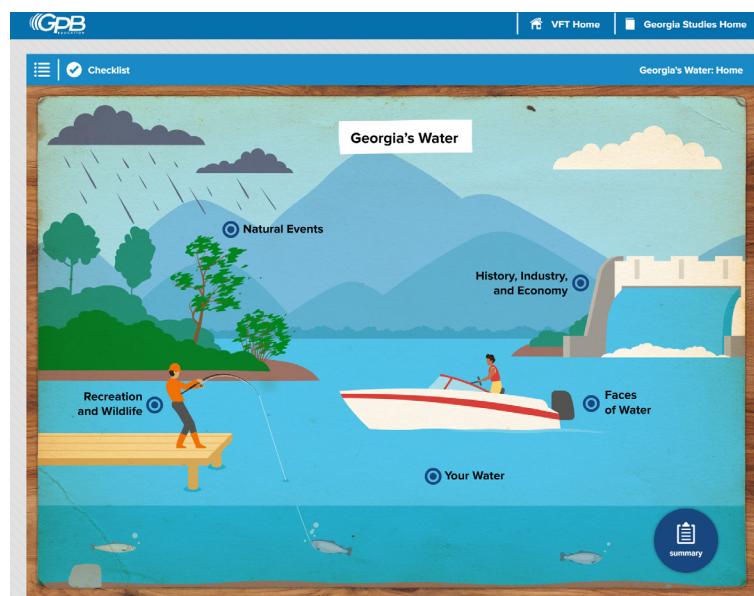
In 2024, total septage received across the region was about 1% lower than in 2023. The most notable changes occurred in the central part of the District, where volumes declined sharply following the closure of the Pumpkinvine Creek WRF septage receiving station and reduced activity at the RM Clayton WRC. Increased volumes at Coppermine WRF and Crooked Creek WRF suggest haulers have shifted to other available treatment sites.

The District will continue to track these trends and work with utilities to gather more data, strengthen understanding of regional capacity, and support efforts to prevent illegal dumping.

Pooling Our Strengths: Partnerships & Progress

Virtual Learning Journey

The District's Virtual Learning Journey continued to raise awareness and expand young minds as it entered into its second year. Launched in March 2024 in partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) as an educational resource for students grades 3-8, the site offers informational videos, virtual reality, interactive maps and graphics, photo galleries, and informative text. The content is aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence in curriculum, and serves as a fun tool to help students 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. In 2025, nearly 24,000 individuals have taken the Virtual Learning Journey, with nearly 11,000 "users" visiting the site on multiple occasions. The District incorporates the Virtual Learning Journey into social media and highlights its many lesson plans through annual contests.



Water Drop Dash 5K

Over 900 runners registered for the District's 13th annual Water Drop Dash on March 22 - an increase of 200 over last year. Presented in partnership with the Chattahoochee Nature Center (CNC) in celebration of EPA's WaterSense Fix a Leak Week, this fast, flat and scenic course along the Chattahoochee River in Roswell, GA is a popular annual event. The race offers a 5K, Fun Run, and virtual race, and provides participants with a Water Drop Dash T-shirt, finisher medals, placement pins, and free race photos. Participants also enjoyed giveaways, crafts, and more at the post-race Water Festival with booths hosted by the District's utility partners and community organizations. We're already looking forward to the next race on March 21, 2026!



Pooling Our Strengths: Partnerships & Progress



SEASON'S EATINGS

Planning your holiday meals? Use these tips to help protect your home and keep costly repairs off the menu.

- Fats, oils, and grease (F.O.G.s) belong in the trash, so throw away any leftovers before the dishes hit the sink.
- Costs for emergency repairs can jump 50% during the holidays, so keeping F.O.G. out of your pipes prevents costly, messy backups.
- Skip the pre-rinse by scraping dishes into the trash before washing. You can save up to 6,000 gallons of water a year.

Know the Flow  Keeping tabs on recent rainfall, soil moisture, streamflow, and water storage helps to better understand the region's water supply. Scan the QR code to visit our website and see the latest stats.

Everything You Do Makes a Difference! For more ways to save, visit mydropcounts.org.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

2025 Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) Award

The District was honored to be recognized by AWE this year for demonstrating leadership in water efficiency and the conservation community.

An AWE member since 2008, the District continues to actively engage with the AWE community. Celine Benoit co-chairs the Water Efficiency Research Committee and serves as liaison for its Technology Development Task Force. She also contributes to the WaterSense & Water Efficient Products Committee. The District supports AWE's Peak Demand Management & Evaluation Study and hosts our Water Use Calculator on their website, broadening its national impact.

In the Headlines

In 2025, media outlets increasingly looked to the District for expertise on critical water issues. Through a partnership with Metro Atlanta CEO, Danny Johnson was featured in a three-part video series highlighting the District's regional impact, the importance of business water conservation, and community planning considerations for data centers and water infrastructure. The videos were shared through Metro Atlanta CEO's daily newsletters, website, and social media, and further promoted through the District's Water Works eNewsletter and social channels.

Neighborhood Publications Advertising

Extending our reach into homeowner's association (HOAs) and neighborhood publications in 2025, the District employed this new strategy to provide timely, informative content to residents on topics such as FOG leading into the holiday cooking season. The District will continue to place educational messaging in these publications in 2026 and seek opportunities to provide important water stewardship information to HOAs.

Rising to the Challenge: Contests Engage & Educate



SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 24, 2025

Metro Atlanta has a unique water story. You may know that water keeps metro Atlanta green and growing. It has been an important part of the success of our economy and central to our region's culture and history, which are some of the many reasons we work so hard to protect our water. In fact, since the creation of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District over 20 years ago, the per capita water use has dropped by more than 30%, thanks in part, to the water conservation efforts of metro area residents, utilities, schools, and businesses.

Though it is not as commonly discussed, wastewater is an important part of the water treatment process. When water goes down the drain or toilet at home or at school, it is considered wastewater. Then the wastewater goes to a water treatment plant where it passes through the wastewater treatment process before being cleaned to a high standard and returned to our natural water sources.

For the 2025 Middle School Water Essay Contest, we ask middle school students to think about what happens to water after it is flushed down the toilet, or drains into the sink or shower. Then, answer one of the following prompts:

1. Briefly describe the wastewater treatment process. Why is wastewater treatment an important part of the region's water systems? How can returning treated wastewater to our rivers and reservoirs benefit our natural water sources?
2. Just because you can flush something down the toilet doesn't mean that you should. Using the resources below, write about what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet and why. Silly and funny (but "appropriate") answers are ok!

Video Contest

High school participation in the 2025 contest nearly tripled from the previous year, with 115 students working individually or in teams to submit 35 entries. The students did an amazing job producing entertaining and creative 30-60 second video PSAs focused on the theme "Making Water Smart: How Do Water Efficient Toilets Benefit Society?", which asked students to consider the history of toilets, how toilets provide important public and environmental health benefits, and how individuals and communities can save water by using more water efficient toilets. This year's contest included English, Spanish, and TikTok categories.

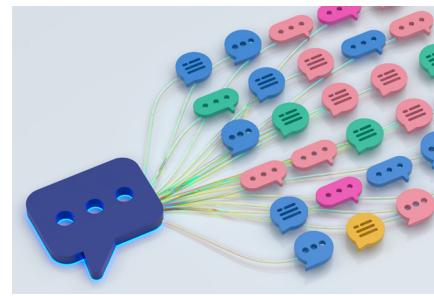
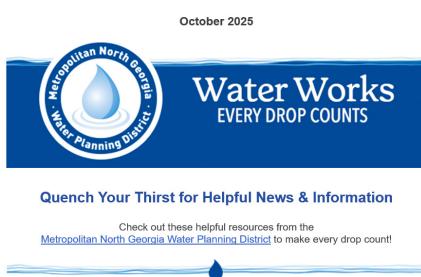
Calendar Contest

The volume of Calendar Contest entries reflects the growing appreciation for our region's water resources. This year, we received 105 submissions, with the winning photo, "Frogger," taken at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens by Stephen Weiss. These stunning examples of nature photography taken across the District add colorful content each month to our social media channels.

Essay Contest

Nearly 350 students in grades 6-8 representing 12 counties and the City of Atlanta submitted essays for our 24th Annual Middle School Essay Contest. Students were asked to choose from two topics: one describing the wastewater process and why it is important, and the other describing why flushing inappropriate items down the toilet creates problems, with the option of writing a letter to their legislators about the WIPES Act. Winners received a cash prize and a large poster of their winning essay.

Making a Splash with Digital Communications



Website

Our website continues to serve as a hub for communications across all stakeholders. In 2025, we tracked about 35,000 active users – up from 9,200 in 2024, with our Home, Middle School Essay Contest, and Water Drop Dash pages receiving the most traffic. We are thrilled the website continues to draw more visitors as a resource for information on all things water related.

eNewsletter

Water Works, our quarterly eNewsletter, reaches nearly 550 recipients who continue to be an engaged audience, with a solid 52-57% open rate for each newsletter.

Social Media

Social media continues to be an important communications channel for the District to reach key stakeholders. In 2025, we experienced a 45 percent increase in followers, primarily in LinkedIn and Facebook, while engagement was up by nearly 14 percent on LinkedIn. Click-through rates are over 16 percent and overall impressions are up about 10 percent from the previous year.

Flowing Toward the Future



Data Centers

Identifying the need to inform regional decision makers on important water impacts and considerations when deliberating on prospective data centers, the District engaged in several outreach activities. In addition to his video interview with the Metro Atlanta CEO this summer, Danny Johnson testified before the Georgia House of Representatives Special Committee on Resource Management - Water Subcommittee. The video and testimony, along with regional presentations, shared valuable information on data center planning considerations, and these resources are available on the District's website to serve as an ongoing resource to communities.

Landmark Settlement Agreement Adopted

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officially adopted the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint settlement agreement that was reached in December 2023. This marks the resolution of a decades-long dispute between Georgia and Alabama over water management. It ensures Metro Atlanta's water supply needs are met by Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River, while also addressing Alabama's minimum flow requirements. This is a true testament to what can be achieved through collaboration and compromise.

In the words of Mayor Andre Dickens, ARC Chairman: "This is a great day for Georgia and all stakeholders of the ACF Basin. The decision puts an end to decades of litigation, and we hope it sets the stage for future cooperation."

District Monitors Legislation

The District continues to monitor legislation and provide education to help raise awareness about the WIPPS Act. This Bill was Introduced to the House in March 2025 and passed the House vote in June 2025, when it was received by the Senate.

Wipes are made of non-woven fibers that do not disintegrate in water, causing blockages in home pipes and city sewer lines. Flushing wipes can lead to costly plumbing repairs, overflowing toilets, damage to septic systems and wastewater treatment plants. This has cost U.S. utilities upwards of \$1 billion annually, which trickles down to ratepayers.

The WIPPS Act requires entities responsible for the labeling or retail packaging of certain premoistened, nonwoven wipes (e.g., baby wipes, cleaning wipes, or personal care wipes) to label such products clearly and conspicuously with the phrase **Do Not Flush** and accompanying symbol as depicted under specified industry guidelines. The Federal Trade Commission must enforce these requirements and may issue regulations to implement the bill.

2025 Financials

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District operated on a calendar-year budget, with revenues coming from local government dues (\$1,398,593), state funding from the Georgia General Assembly (\$750,000), and a GA EPD 319 Grant (\$160,000).

In 2025, 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 2026. The District strives to maintain a minimum fund balance of \$300,000 for operating contingencies.

		2025 Adopted June 6, 2024	2025 Draft November 14, 2025
Revenues			
State Funding (Appropriations)	...	\$250,000	\$250,000
State Funding (GAEPD 319 Grant)	...		\$160,000
State Funding (Plan Update)	...		\$500,000
Local Dues (2010 Census at \$0.25 per capita)	...	1,398,593	\$1,398,593
Interest Income	...	\$55,000	\$55,000
Misc. Fees	...	\$17,000	\$10,870
Total Revenues	...	\$1,720,593	\$2,374,463
Expenses by Type			
Chairman's Allowance	...	\$3,000	\$3,000
Salaries	...	\$733,966	\$733,966
Fringe Benefits	...	\$366,983	\$352,304
Overhead	...	\$365,515	\$363,900
Contracts	...	\$235,000	\$275,000
Miscellaneous Operating	...	\$85,000	\$85,000
Public Awareness / Education	...	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total Expenses	...	\$1,889,463	\$1,913,169
Beginning Fund Balance	...		\$1,369,569
Projected Ending Fund Balance	...		\$1,830,862



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