

Take Action

Prevent Pollution

Slow the Flow

Venture Out

Explore

Altamaha Wildlife Management Area

georgiawildlife.com/altamaha-wma

EPA Healthy Watershed Protection

www.epa.gov/hwp

Georgia Outdoor Map

gadnr.org

Georgia State Parks

gastateparks.org

Connect

Georgia Adopt-a-Stream

adoptastream.georgia.gov

Savannah Tree Foundation

www.savannahtree.com

Keep Golden Isles Beautiful

www.kgib.org

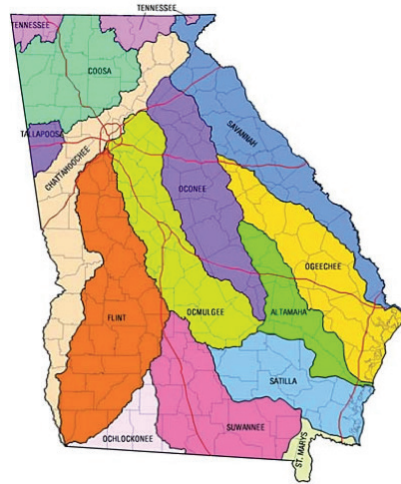
Georgia Water Coalition

www.gawater.org

Riverkeepers for Savannah, Altamaha, Ogeechee, Satilla and St. Mary's

www.waterkeeper.org

STEWARDSHIP SHORT: Watersheds and Stormwater



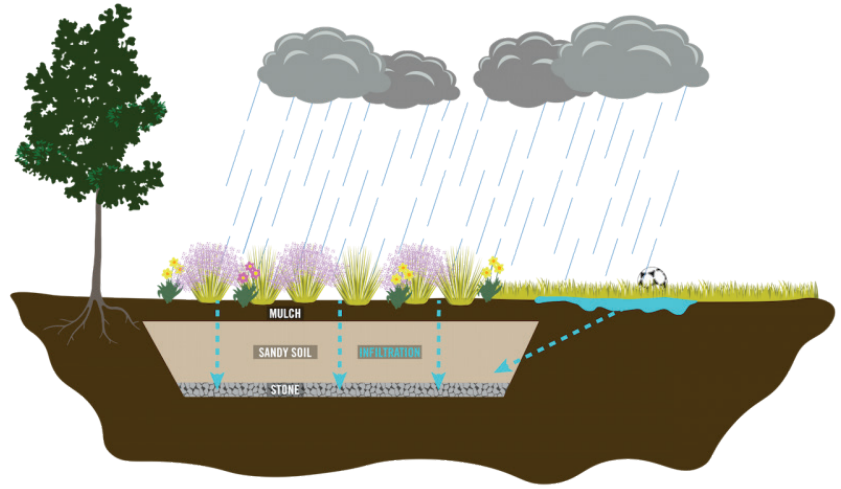
There are 78 major river basins or watersheds, in the U.S., including 14 in Georgia. Credit for map: Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Everyone lives in a watershed, or a region in which all water flows across or through. The area typically drains to one waterbody, like a river, lake or marsh. Many rivers in Georgia flow to the sea, which means actions inland impact the ocean. Follow these tips to learn about your watershed and help preserve coastal water quality.

Action 1 | PREVENT POLLUTION

When stormwater flows over the ground, it picks up pollutants that eventually end up in local estuaries and the ocean. This type of pollution is called nonpoint source pollution, and it is the leading cause of water quality problems in America. Chemicals can also enter watersheds through your home if washing machines, sinks, toilets and showers.

- Use recommended amounts of fertilizer. For more information visit extension.uga.edu/programs-services/pesticide-safety-education.html
- Wash your car on grass instead of paved surfaces.
- Keep storm drains clear and never put grass clippings, used paint or motor oil in them.
- Pick up and properly dispose of pet waste, which can harbor bacteria like E. coli.
- Don't flush medications. Many chemicals are not removed by wastewater treatment.
- Consider using phosphate free detergents and soaps.
- Skip single-use plastics, like straws and plastic bags, and invest in reusable products. Plastic never breaks down and instead degrades into smaller and smaller pieces.
- Consider adding a microfiber-catching device to your washer and dryer. Microfibers from synthetic fabrics are found in many waterbodies.



A bioretention cell is a green infrastructure stormwater management practice that consists of layers of sandy soils, mulch and stone that capture and treat runoff.

Action 2 | SLOW THE FLOW

Stormwater is water from rainfall or other precipitation that falls on impervious surfaces. These are surfaces that don't absorb water, like a road or a parking lot. When stormwater is not managed properly it can cause flooding, poor water quality, and eroded shorelines. Most storm drains do not lead to treatment plants, so anything that goes in them will likely end up directly into rivers or estuaries. Green infrastructure practices help slow and treat stormwater on site.

- Plant trees. They take up water in their roots, hold soil in place, and promote infiltration (water seeping into the soil).
- Implement simple and inexpensive management techniques in your home such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and downspout disconnection.
- Help your community plan and implement larger scale methods for managing stormwater, like bioretention ponds and permeable pavement. Find out how to get involved at gacoast.uga.edu/stormwater.

Action 3 | VENTURE OUT

One of the best ways to help protect your watershed is to see it for yourself. Determine which watershed you live in, and then get out there and explore!

- Locate your watershed using water.usgs.gov.
- Participate in a river or coastal clean-up.
- Join a water quality monitoring group such as a local (Waterkeeper.org).
- Take part in a tree-planting event.
- Have fun! Kayak, hike, swim, or simply relax by your local stream, river or estuary.



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Works Cited:

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