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As “water wars” continue, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper says more actions are needed to fight effects of climate change

ATLANTA, GA – The decades long “water wars” had another day in court, as the U.S. Supreme Court considered a second special master’s recommendation to dismiss Florida’s lawsuit against Georgia. For thirty years, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida have fought over the use of water in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin (ACF). Combined, the states have spent hundreds of millions of taxpayers’ dollars on litigation since the 1990s. Today’s oral arguments before the Supreme Court in *Florida v. Georgia* should be the states’ final say in this particular chapter of the dispute.

In 2013, Florida launched the current lawsuit alleging that Georgia was using too much water, that Florida suffered economic and ecological harm as a result, and requested equitable apportionment - or a dividing - of the waters in ACF River Basin.

Today, the Court considered a Special Master’s 2019 recommendation to drop Florida’s case. The Court-appointed Special Master stated that Florida failed to meet its burden of proof to show by clear and convincing evidence that Georgia uses too much water or that any harm to Florida’s oyster population could be traced to water use in Georgia.

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s (CRK) primary concern is if the Court dismisses Florida’s case, then Georgia leaders will stop thinking the state needs to advance water conservation and efficiency in the municipal, industrial, and agricultural sectors. Georgia still has room to improve how it measures water use and consumption. Under constant legal threats, Georgia became a leader for water conservation, and must remain a leader to protect water quantity and quality throughout the ACF basin.

As an advocate for the Chattahoochee River, CRK also believes Alabama, Florida, and Georgia must negotiate an interstate compact to share the basin’s water. The three states can find a list of technical solutions produced by the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, Flint (ACF) Stakeholders, Inc., of which CRK is a member. ACF is a collaborative group of agricultural, municipal, industrial, environmental, individual, and other interests who live, work, and use the water resources of the ACF River Basin.

“At the end of the day, meeting the challenges of climate change - not legal challenges - should drive our future water decisions,” said Chris Manganiello, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s Water Policy Director, “And doing so collaboratively has a better chance of making those decisions equitable and just.”

The Court will issue a final ruling in *Florida v. Georgia* before the Court’s current session ends in July.

For more details, visit <https://chattahoochee.org/2018/06/tri-state-water-conflict/>

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Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River, its lakes and tributaries for the people, fish and wildlife that depend upon it.

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