



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stormwater runoff causes concerning nutrient pollution in Lake Lanier for second consecutive year

LAKE LANIER, GA – Data collected in 2020 shows that Lake Lanier continues to receive excess nutrient levels, indicating that improper stormwater management continues to plague this important stretch of the Chattahoochee River. The lake contained its highest recorded levels in 2019, but 2020 wasn't much better.

Chlorophyll is the main indicator used to detect algae that blooms as result of excess nutrients flowing into the lake. Too much algae in the water can negatively affect water quality, impact taste and smell of drinking water even after treatment, raise the cost of treating water to meet drinking water standards, and cause decreased oxygen levels that fish and other aquatic life need to survive.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) sets chlorophyll limits at five monitoring locations on the lake. In the past two years, chlorophyll levels at all five sites exceeded state standards. More alarming, levels are higher than they have been since Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) began testing in 2010 and since EPD began testing in 2000.

Much of this pollution is caused by stormwater runoff from fertilizers used on lawns and farms. Other sources include treated sewage discharges, failing septic systems, and clogged sewer pipes from improper household disposal of fats, oils, and grease.

"We are working with several local governments, utilities, and other stakeholders to address this problem, but individuals who reside in the watershed have a critical role to play as well," said CRK Headwaters Director, Dale Caldwell. "Cumulative and seemingly small impacts can multiply and lead to a positive impact on this very valuable water source."

Residents living in Lake Lanier's watershed can help by limiting the amount of fertilizers they put on their lawns, routinely maintaining their septic systems, and not pouring fats, oils, and greases down the drain.

The record-high levels recorded in the last two years demonstrate the need to revisit a 2018 federal cleanup plan created to reduce unwanted nutrients in the Lake Lanier watershed. Local stakeholders, including CRK, will meet this spring to assess the plan's effectiveness and explore additional opportunities for water quality improvement.

CRK's annual Lake Lanier monitoring program is part of [The Clean Lanier Equation](#).

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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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