



# RIVERCHAT

Summer/Fall 2023

A publication of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK)



## E. COLI CONTAMINATION

### PROMPTS 15-MILE CLOSURE OF CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

The Fourth of July holiday weekend was quieter than usual on a popular stretch of the Chattahoochee River this summer, where a historic closure sent recreators hoping to tube or kayak through a portion of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) further upstream. The closure was the result of an investigation by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) and the CRNRA into dangerously elevated E. coli bacteria levels within the river park.

E. coli is found in the feces of humans and warm-blooded animals. While heavy rains can carry bacteria into waterways, unusual spikes can also indicate sewage contamination from a direct source like a wastewater discharge pipe. Routine sampling through the Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) and BacteriALERT programs detected elevated bacteria levels in the CRNRA in June, prompting coordinated efforts by CRK and CRNRA staff to identify the source of the contamination.

While patrolling the river on June 29, CRK located a discharge of undertreated wastewater into the river and immediately notified Fulton County and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). An analysis of water samples collected by CRK and processed in our

new laboratory in Mableton revealed E. coli levels more than 300 times higher than those recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for water recreation, posing potential risks to public health – especially for young children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems.

After CRK discovered the source of the contamination, Fulton County confirmed that a malfunction had occurred at its Big Creek Water Reclamation Facility in Roswell, a wastewater treatment plant that treats more than 20 million gallons of sewage each day. To protect public health and safety, the CRNRA announced the initial closure of six miles of the river from the Chattahoochee Nature Center to Johnson Ferry Road on June 30.

CRK and CRNRA staff continued emergency daily sampling of points of concern along the river. When testing revealed elevated bacteria levels further downstream, the CRNRA extended the river park closure to all sections downstream of the Chattahoochee Nature Center – fifteen miles in total.

The cause of the malfunction at the plant remains unconfirmed, but the discharge of undertreated wastewater is a violation of Fulton County's permit

under the Clean Water Act. CRK and the CRNRA have provided information to Georgia EPD, which is investigating the incident and will determine any enforcement actions for the plant for the failure to meet its permit limits.

On July 19, nearly three weeks after the initial closure, the CRNRA reopened all sections of the river park. CRNRA officials made this decision in consultation with U.S. Public Health Service officials after testing indicated that bacteria levels had returned to EPA-recommended limits for safe water recreation.

While the river park was closed, CRK and CRNRA staff continued testing water quality and monitoring impacts on wildlife and aquatic resources. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released additional water from Buford Dam to help dilute the E. coli contamination, and there have been no indications of a fish kill resulting from the discharge.

CRK continues monitoring for bacteria through the NWW and BacteriALERT programs. Further study will determine how the river was able to assimilate the pulse of nutrients from the discharge.

*For updates on the status of this incident, visit [chattahoochee.org/big-creek](http://chattahoochee.org/big-creek).*

Thank you for supporting our efforts to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River.

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Our mission is to advocate and secure the protection and stewardship of the Chattahoochee River, its lakes, tributaries and watershed.

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## REFLECTIONS: CARRYING THE TORCH

At the beginning of my first year as technical programs director with Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Juliet Cohen joined our team as general counsel. During our first six years of working together, Juliet and I tackled all manner of river issues, from fighting the illegal filling of creeks to advocating for limits on nutrient discharges from wastewater treatment facilities. When our founding Riverkeeper and executive director Sally Bethea retired in 2015, she passed the torch to us: I took on the title of Riverkeeper and Juliet became executive director.

Juliet and I have co-led the organization for the past eight years. In that time, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's membership, budget, and staff have grown by more than 50%. Our programs like Trash-Free Chattahoochee and Neighborhood Water Watch have also

grown by more than 100%. We secured major victories for the river, like our precedent-setting win against American Sealcoat for dumping asphalt sealant chemicals into a tributary less than 1,000 feet from the river (*page 4*). We also invested in the organization through infrastructure like boathouses and laboratories and by expanding our personnel.

We have developed a solid team of professionals who work tirelessly to protect and steward the Chattahoochee River, and to be a resource for our 10,000 members and millions of people who depend on the river and its lakes and tributaries. With Juliet's departure as executive director to begin a new chapter in her career, CRK once again taps into the tremendous talent we have on board to carry the torch into our fourth decade.

I now hold the title of Riverkeeper and executive director. Supporting me is an outstanding team of advocates including my deputy director Henry Jacobs and development director Kyndall Thiessen. Together, they have nearly 15 years of experience with CRK. I invite you to meet the entire CRK team on our website or in person at our Membership Celebration on November 5, held at our new metro Atlanta office in Mableton (*page 8*), as we celebrate our mission to ensure the Chattahoochee flows with enough clean water now and for future generations.



From left, Riverkeeper and executive director Jason Ulseth, former executive director Juliet Cohen, Deputy Director Henry Jacobs, and Development Director Kyndall Thiessen.

  
**JASON ULSETH**  
Riverkeeper & Executive Director

## FACES OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE:

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper recently bid farewell to our Water Fellow, Madison Cantrell, who first joined our team in 2022 as a Neighborhood Water Watch intern. As a graduate of Georgia State University's degree program in water resources, Madison brought an abundance of field and lab skills that aided our pollution investigations throughout the Chattahoochee River watershed. She exemplified the potential of our internship and fellowship programs to provide people in science and public health tracks with opportunities to gain real-world



experience. "I learned so much throughout my time here and will always remember all the fun adventures," says Madison, who just landed a fantastic job working with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Norcross. We are grateful for Madison's time with CRK and wish her well in her new role!

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER



# ON PATROL WITH CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

## Summer water testing at Lake Lanier

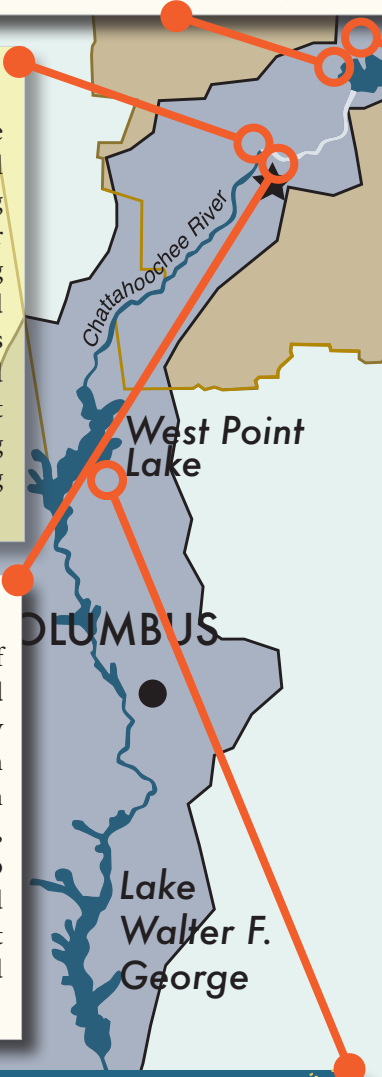


As part of the Neighborhood Water Watch program, CRK conducts weekly monitoring of E. coli bacteria levels at public swimming areas during the summer. The beaches at Lake Lanier's River Forks Park, Don Carter State Park, Mary Alice Park, and Olympic Park are popular with families of young children, who are particularly vulnerable to serious illness from E. coli infections. CRK publishes monitoring data from these beaches on our website ([www.chattahoochee.org/nww](http://www.chattahoochee.org/nww)) and on Swim Guide ([www.theswimguide.org](http://www.theswimguide.org)), an international resource for sharing data on safe swimming conditions, to help beachgoers swim safely.



## Tracking spill on Nancy Creek

Intermittent problems at Nancy Creek's Tilly Mill site prompted CRK field teams to investigate potential upstream sources. Extensive tracking covering miles of tributaries led us to a small reach near Winters Chapel Road in Doraville. An ongoing spill had created a miniature wetland that drained during moderate rains, causing bacteria spikes miles downstream. DeKalb County Watershed responded by communicating with the adjacent apartment complex to get the issue resolved. With the clog cleared, the retention area and downstream receiving waters have now returned to baseline conditions.



## Unpermitted clearing along Chestatee

A tip from a community member in March alerted CRK to a buffer violation along the Chestatee River in Lumpkin County. CRK staff investigated and found a section of the Chestatee's riparian buffer had been cleared to the river's edge. Georgia state law prohibits the clearing of riparian buffers without a permit; these areas increase riverbank stability, provide shade that cools streams, and filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before they reach our waterways. CRK contacted Lumpkin County officials, who issued a stop work order and are requiring the landowner to restore the cleared stream buffer.

## Manhole overflow at Sandy Creek

Extreme bacteria spikes detected in the tailwaters of Sandy Creek sent CRK field teams to the troubled waterway in search of a source. Thanks to weekly samples collected by Neighborhood Water Watch volunteers, CRK quickly identified the source as an overflowing manhole clogged by fats, oils, greases, and wipes. The City of Atlanta has been quick to address issues in the tributary, where tests and inspections conducted by CRK have identified at least half-a-dozen spills. Now, water quality has returned to baseline conditions.



## Sediment pollution in Blue John Creek

In February, CRK discovered excess sediment from the construction of Creekview Vista Apartments entering Blue John Creek in LaGrange, Georgia. An analysis of samples collected from an outfall that drains a tributary to Blue John Creek found turbidity values more than 10 times the permit limit. CRK contacted the City of LaGrange and an inspector found insufficiencies with best management practices (BMPs) near the outfall in question. A stop work order was issued until new BMPs could be installed. CRK staff continues to monitor the site to ensure compliance with the stormwater permits.

## NEW DROP BOX at Chattahoochee Nature Center

With continued support from the City of Roswell, CRK is excited to partner with Chattahoochee Nature Center (CNC) on a new home for our Neighborhood Water Watch drop box in Roswell.

The box is now housed at CNC, located at 9135 Willeo Road, where Neighborhood Water Watch volunteers can drop off their samples on Thursdays.



We greatly appreciate the opportunity to partner with CNC, which maintains a 127-acre nature center on the Chattahoochee River. To learn more about CNC's mission to connect people with nature and to conduct wildlife rehabilitation programs, conservation efforts, and education programs that help preserve and conserve the Chattahoochee River watershed, visit [www.chattnaturecenter.org](http://www.chattnaturecenter.org).

APALACHICOLA  
*Gulf of Mexico*

# PROTECTING STREAMS AND COMMUNITIES FROM INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION (PSCIP)

## 10+ YEARS OF WINS

**P**olluted runoff from industrial sites poses a threat to water quality throughout the Chattahoochee River watershed. Through the Protecting Streams and Communities from Industrial Pollution (PSCIP) program, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper uses comprehensive mapping, review of state records, and field investigations to find and stop industrial sites discharging polluted runoff into our waterways when it rains.

CRK inspects hundreds of industrial operations annually in Georgia and Alabama, providing guidance to owners and operators on staying compliant with applicable laws and permits, and, when necessary, taking enforcement action.

CRK's PSCIP program is a model for Waterkeepers throughout the U.S. to find industrial polluters and hold them accountable to the Clean Water Act. As we celebrate 10 years of the PSCIP program, we look back at some of the key enforcement cases that have resulted in water quality improvement.

### American Sealcoat

CRK discovered oily black sludge seeping from a storm drain into a small tributary less than 1,000 feet from the river. CRK traced the sludge to asphalt sealant manufacturer American Sealcoat (AS). Operating without an industrial stormwater permit – plainly in violation of the Clean Water Act – AS repeatedly and intentionally dumped toxic waste down a nearby storm drain. AS refused to come into compliance and CRK filed a lawsuit against them in July 2014. The company quickly abandoned the site and fled the state, leaving behind a toxic mess. In August 2015, a judge issued a default judgment against AS, ordering them to pay a \$10 million penalty to the U.S. Department of the Treasury – one of the highest environmental penalties in Georgia history.

On the heels of this historic judgment, CRK reached a settlement agreement with the property owner of the AS site, M&K Warehouses. As a result, M&K Warehouses is completing approximately \$500,000 in site cleanup and restoration.

### Pilgrim's Pride and Mar-Jac Poultry

In 2012, CRK detected bacterial levels in Gainesville's Flat Creek more than 1,000 times the level recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). CRK tracked the source to polluted runoff from two chicken processors: Pilgrim's Pride and Mar-Jac Poultry. CRK reported the sites to the EPA, which conducted comprehensive inspections and issued violation notices and fines for both facilities,



### Piles of aggregate material and gravel stored on the banks of Sweetwater Creek at Lawrence/K&H Recycling

resulting in a new stormwater treatment plant at one site and new stormwater management protocols at both sites.

### Ready Mix USA

CRK discovered that Ready Mix USA was in violation of stormwater laws at nine concrete production facilities located throughout the watershed. The company failed to monitor water quality, submit reports to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, and implement best management practices to prevent the flow of polluted runoff into the river. After unsuccessful attempts to contact the company to discuss their compliance issues, CRK initiated legal action against Ready Mix USA for unpermitted stormwater discharges. The legal action opened a dialogue with the company, resulting in the hiring of environmental compliance staff and the development of new protocols to stop polluted runoff from leaving the sites.

### Lawrence/K&H Recycling

In 2016, CRK discovered an 11-acre property in Douglas County that had towering piles of aggregate material and gravel stored on the banks of Sweetwater Creek. During heavy rains, dirty water flowed from the site into the creek. CRK sent the property owners a formal notice of intent to sue pursuant to the Clean Water Act; this action prompted a response from the owners, who brought in a consultant and developed plans to install BMPs to control stormwater runoff as well as remove the aggregate materials.

### A&R Ironworks

In 2018, while investigating a metalworking facility in Tucker, CRK staff noticed materials including sediment piles, scrap metal, and a garbage heap stored outside the facility's walls along the banks of Burnt Fork Creek (a tributary to Peachtree Creek, which flows into the Chattahoochee River). The facility failed to obtain necessary stormwater permits and was in violation of state and federal law. After attempts to work with the company were dismissed, CRK filed a Clean Water Act lawsuit that ultimately spurred A&R Ironworks to eliminate almost all outdoor storage of industrial materials. CRK directed \$60,000 to projects managed by the South Fork Conservancy and the DeKalb County Department of Parks and Recreation to aid in restoration.



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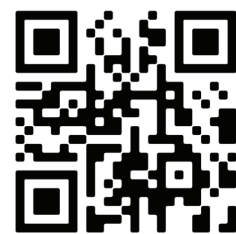
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For more information, visit <https://chattahoochee.org/donate/planned-giving/> or contact Becca Klein at [bklein@chattahoochee.org](mailto:bklein@chattahoochee.org).

## A NEW CHAPTER IN METRO ATLANTA

**A**fter 22 years in West Midtown, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has a new home! This summer we moved our metro Atlanta operations into a new office space at The Series at Riverview Landing in Mableton, Georgia.

Riverview Landing is a mixed-use community of restaurants, shops, and apartments just steps away from the Chattahoochee River. With walking trails, biking trails, and a kayak launch around the corner, we feel right at home surrounded by the beauty of the Chattahoochee.

The new office space consists of four conference rooms, a shared workspace, kitchen, and laboratory. Thanks to a generous grant, the lab is outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment that allows us to conduct all water quality testing and analysis on-site. Our partners at Interface generously donated flooring for the entire space.

Our new location reminds us of all the progress we have made to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River and the importance of this work to all the communities who depend upon the river, its lakes, and its tributaries. CRK extends our sincerest thanks to those who made this move possible: our staff, board of directors, generous donors, movers, contractors, members, supporters, and the team at The Series at Riverview Landing. We look forward to the next twenty years in this incredible home.



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### 29TH ANNUAL MEMBER CELEBRATION

**NOVEMBER 5, 2023**  
METRO ATLANTA OFFICE

For 29 years, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's passionate supporters have helped us keep watch over our waters. CRK is pleased to invite our members to come together for our annual Member Celebration at our new metro Atlanta office on Sunday, November 5, 2023. Food and beverages will be provided, including beer courtesy of our neighbors at Reformation Brewery! CRK will also recognize the outstanding volunteers whose hard work helps protect the Chattahoochee River watershed every day.

Learn more at  
[www.chattahoochee.org/  
member-celebration](http://www.chattahoochee.org/member-celebration)



# THE DINOSAURS OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

The longnose gar (*Lepisosteus osseus*) not only looks prehistoric, it is prehistoric! It is believed that the ancestors of the longnose gar that swim in rivers today were around during the Cretaceous Period, when dinosaurs like T. Rex and Triceratops roamed the land. These curious-looking fish are defined by their long, slender snout that is more than twice as long as their head and their tubular-shaped bodies. Adults are

large, growing up to 8 feet long and 35 pounds. Longnose gar are predators with sharp teeth; they consume smaller fish like shiners and sunfish, as well as crayfish. They favor slow-moving water and may be found in the Chattahoochee River and its reservoirs, as well as most major river systems in the Southeast.

Although longnose gar are prehistoric fish, they have several interesting

adaptations that make them well-suited to today's southeastern river ecosystems. They are relatively long-lived bony fish (like sharks) that have overlapping, armor-like scales on their bodies, resulting in few natural predators. Longnose gar have gills, but they have also adapted to breathe air! They have swim bladders that can fill with oxygen from the air to help them survive in warm, low-oxygen waters.

Longnose gar have even evolved resilient methods of reproducing. Females produce up to 30,000 eggs and sometimes lay the eggs near bass nests, where male bass protect the eggs from predators. The adults will hang out in the shallow areas, so next time you are on the river, look out for these dinosaurs of the Chattahoochee.



Photo courtesy Brett Billings, USFWS

## THE ENIGMATIC CHARM OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE TRILLIUM: NATURE'S VANISHING ACT

The Chattahoochee trillium (*Trillium decipiens*) is a wildflower that thrives in the enchanting woodlands of the southeastern United States. With its elegant beauty and unique characteristics, this native species is a natural wonder.

Standing proudly at about 12 inches tall, the Chattahoochee trillium showcases a vibrant display of color. Its three distinct petals, which can range from deep red to pale pink, form a perfect symmetry that catches the eye of any nature enthusiast. Adding to its allure, the flower blooms atop a slender stalk, providing a striking contrast against the lush green foliage.

*In the early spring, as sunlight filters through the canopy, the trillium emerges from the forest floor, unfurling its leaves and blossoms in a magnificent show.*



Photo courtesy Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

One of the most intriguing aspects of this species is its life cycle. The Chattahoochee trillium is part of the ephemeral plant family, meaning it has a brief above-ground presence. In the early spring, as sunlight filters through the canopy, the trillium emerges from the forest floor, unfurling its leaves and blossoms in a magnificent show. As the warm days of summer arrive, the plant retreats back to its subterranean existence, leaving behind no trace.

The species thrives in the well-drained, nutrient-rich soil found near riverbanks and damp forest areas. It is often spotted along the banks of the Chattahoochee River, hence its name, though it can also be found in other parts of Georgia and Alabama.

While it is a captivating sight, it is important to appreciate these flowers responsibly. Due to its delicate nature

and slow growth, the species faces several conservation challenges including habitat loss and illegal collection. It is crucial to preserve its natural habitat and resist the temptation to disturb or remove these beautiful flowers from the wild. The next time you venture into the woodlands of the southeastern United States, keep an eye out for the enchanting Chattahoochee trillium!

# DISCOVERING THE WONDERS OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE



Photo by Tammy Bates

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is proud to offer learning experiences that help young people discover their love for our river and feel empowered to protect the river. Now in its second year, the Water Warriors Wander + Wonder is a one-day environmental education and recreation program hosted by CRK in collaboration with Paddle4Tomorrow and Georgia Audubon. The program invites students from around the metro Atlanta region to experience a birding nature walk, a water science

demonstration, and a kayaking lesson on the water.

This summer, CRK hosted two events for fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students at Sweetwater Creek State Park and Murphey Candler Park. Rotating at one-hour intervals, all 55 participants spent time learning about each organizations' missions and participating in hands-on educational activities.

At the end of the day, the students were brimming with enthusiasm. Parent

Sarah Lee shared: "My son, as well as his friends, really loved it! A huge thank you to [CRK outings director Tammy Bates], to the volunteers, and especially the three programs that worked cohesively. We can't wait until next year and my youngest, going into second grade this year, can't wait until she can do the program, as well."

In July, CRK also hosted a paddle trip and science program for high school students. Each participant received kayak lessons from Kayak Classes of Georgia, paddling from Garrard Landing in Roswell to the Island Ford unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. The group also tested water quality and discussed challenges facing the Chattahoochee River.

While immersed in the outdoors, these young adventurers deepened their personal connections to our natural resources and gained a better understanding of the role we each play in stewarding our waterways. CRK looks forward to continuing this valuable education program with our partners for years to come.

## A NEW COLLABORATION WITH COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

Interested in making a donation to support this partnership? Please contact Henry Jacobs at [hjacob@chattahoochee.org](mailto:hjacobs@chattahoochee.org).

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is excited to announce a partnership with Columbus State University that provides a new opportunity for students, faculty, and community members to get involved in our Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) program.

NWW is a community-driven program designed to improve water quality in our waterways and protect human health. Volunteers collect water samples and bring them to CRK's laboratories where the samples are promptly analyzed for turbidity, conductivity, and the presence of harmful bacteria. Any threats indicated are addressed by CRK as we work with local governments, neighborhood groups, and leaders to stop public health threats and restore our streams.

Over the past year, we have worked with the Biology Department at Columbus State University (CSU) to establish a NWW laboratory in an existing space on their main campus in Columbus. CRK is providing IDEXX® Colilert® equipment as well as technical training and internship opportunities for CSU



From left, Vanisha Strahota (CRK Columbus Fellow), Ashley Desensi (CRK Technical Programs Specialist), Dr. Mike Newbrey (CSU Senior Lecturer), Jess Sterling (CRK Technical Programs Director), Mike Meyer (CRK Neighborhood Water Watch Director)

students. Prior to this partnership, the nearest NWW lab was located in our Middle Chattahoochee outreach office in LaGrange. CRK also has NWW labs at our offices in metro Atlanta and Gainesville.

"We are very excited about the new partnership between Columbus State University and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper because the partnership will provide a fantastic opportunity for our students to conduct collaborative research and gain hands-on lab and field experience with CRK water-specialists," says Dr. Michael Newbrey, a senior lecturer in the Biology Department.

"The dedicated lab space for CRK demonstrates the commitment CSU has to the partnership and in the training of students for the study and conservation of water resources."

Along with CSU students and faculty, this partnership also provides opportunities for community members in Columbus, Phenix City, and the surrounding region to become NWW volunteers and help us monitor local waterways on a regular basis.

To learn more, please contact Ashley Desensi at [adesensi@chattahoochee.org](mailto:adesensi@chattahoochee.org).

# NEW REPORT: WATER UTILITIES ON FRONT-LINE FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Source: [Clean Energy Atlanta](#)

When people talk about the signals climate change is sending to Georgians, they tend to focus on destructive coastal flooding, damaging hurricanes, agricultural impacts, and the serious implications of heat on public health.

But what does a changing climate hold in store for the 430-mile-long Chattahoochee River and the more than five million people who depend on it?

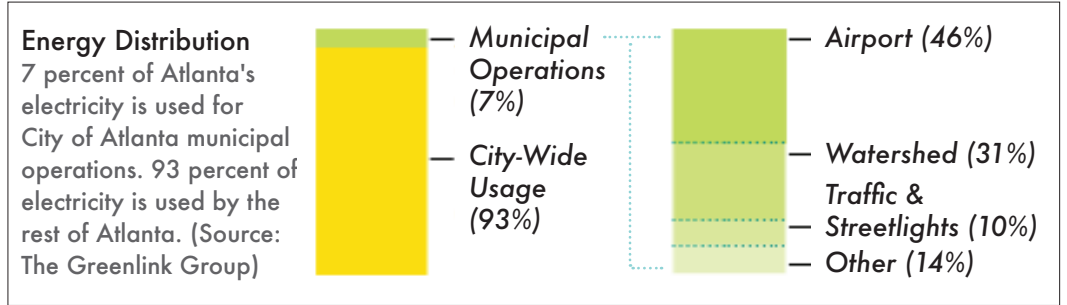
Because climate change is driven by the burning of fossil fuels and generation of greenhouse gases, most of the conversations about how to stop it center on energy production and consumption: we must transition to renewable generation like solar and wind, and stop burning non-renewable fossil fuels like coal, natural gas, and petroleum products.

As energy consumers, public water utilities have a significant role to play and are vulnerable to climate change. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's new report, *Water Utilities: On the Front-Line Fighting Climate Change*, addresses the less-often understood or discussed role public water utilities will play in the climate emergency.

Until recently, climate change conversations involving water utilities have typically focused on fixing chronic urban flooding by adapting green infrastructure in parks or streets. But the truth is that water utilities use a tremendous amount of energy to provide homes and businesses with clean drinking water, to treat that water after it is used, and to send it back to our waterways. Public water utilities can — and must — reduce their carbon footprints.

In the context of responding to climate change, mitigation means reducing the production or generation of carbon dioxide — for example, by installing solar panels for a renewable source of energy. Adaptation means adapting to the conditions we deal with day-to-day — like by building green infrastructure to reduce urban flooding. Adopting both approaches helps make communities, and the resources communities depend upon, more sustainable and resilient.

In the Chattahoochee River basin, the City of Atlanta is the only local government that has developed a



comprehensive clean energy plan with clear goals to reduce the city's public water utility carbon footprint.

As the city's second largest municipal energy consumer, the Department of Watershed Management (DWM) is a prime target for carbon burning reduction. DWM's clean energy transition strategies include energy conservation, facility upgrades, and the development of new on-site energy generation. On-site projects include methane gas energy recovery systems at the R. M. Clayton and Utoy Creek wastewater treatment plants.

Additionally, in 2021 the city launched the Solar Atlanta Program, currently

the largest municipal solar program in Georgia. To date, Solar Atlanta has outfitted nearly two-dozen facilities across the city with on-site solar. Of those, six DWM facilities — including the Chattahoochee and Hemphill drinking water treatment plants — will generate some electricity via on-site solar panels.

Read the report online at [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) to learn what other climate mitigation strategies local governments and water utilities can adopt to make the Chattahoochee River and its communities more resilient and sustainable.



The Chattahoochee Drinking Water Treatment Plant (left) and R. M. Clayton Water Reclamation Plant (right) with the river in the foreground and the downtown skyline in the background

Photo by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper



Utoy Creek Water Reclamation Plant

Photo courtesy Cherry Street Energy



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Keep up with all of CRK's events and learn more about how to get involved at [chattahoochee.org/events](http://chattahoochee.org/events).

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A record number of volunteers joined Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's 13th annual Sweep the Hooch! Equipped with gloves and garbage bags, 1,400 individuals set out on foot, waded in creeks, and paddled in kayaks to pull off one of the heaviest lifts in Sweep the Hooch history, removing 32 tons of trash from 62 sites throughout the watershed. Thank you to all the volunteers and to our sponsors for supporting our mission to achieve a Trash-Free Chattahoochee.

# WaterFEST

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's first annual Waterfest on Earth Day, April 22, was a success! CRK's partners, supporters, and community members spent the afternoon at Midland Greenway in Gainesville enjoying live music, food, drinks, and family-friendly fun – all in support of water conservation and education efforts in the headwaters region of the Chattahoochee River. Special thanks to the City of Gainesville Water Resources and Parks & Recreation departments for their ongoing support and the talented artists, musicians, guest exhibitors, volunteers, and sponsors who made the day so special. 🎵

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