



CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER®

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026

City of Atlanta, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper settle lawsuit over river pollution

ATLANTA, GA – The City of Atlanta and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) have reached a collaborative [settlement agreement](#) to resolve a Clean Water Act [lawsuit](#) filed in 2024 regarding the state’s largest wastewater treatment plant.

In the agreement, the City’s Department of Watershed Management (DWM) reaffirmed its commitment to investing millions of dollars in new equipment, upgrades, and repairs at the R.M. Clayton Water Reclamation Center. The City of Atlanta has already begun many of these repairs, and the plant’s river discharges are in compliance with its wastewater discharge permit. These important investments will continue to safeguard the Chattahoochee River and improve water quality downstream of the plant, ensuring safe and enjoyable conditions for riverbank communities, anglers, boaters, hikers, and wildlife.

“I applaud Mayor Andre Dickens, Commissioner Greg Eyerly, and the DWM staff for their commitment to our common goal: safeguarding the health of the Chattahoochee River,” said Jason Ulseth, CRK’s riverkeeper and executive director. “The City’s investments in R.M. Clayton will improve water quality in the Chattahoochee River for city of Atlanta residents and communities downstream. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper looks forward to working with the City to protect water quality in the Chattahoochee River for the benefit of all the people and wildlife that depend on it.”

“The City of Atlanta is proud to continue our long-standing commitment to protecting the Chattahoochee River and ensuring the reliability of our wastewater infrastructure,” said Commissioner Eyerly. “This agreement reflects the power of collaboration and our shared responsibility to invest in clean water. The improvements at the R.M. Clayton Water Reclamation Center are not just about meeting regulatory standards — they’re about safeguarding a vital natural resource for future generations.”

CRK, represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, filed a Clean Water Act lawsuit against the City on September 6, 2024, after tracing pollutants in the river to the R.M. Clayton facility. Over the past year, the City has identified improvement opportunities at the wastewater treatment plant and has committed to implementing repairs and upgrades over the next 60 months.

Located in Northwest Atlanta, R.M. Clayton is the city's largest wastewater treatment facility, and one of the biggest in the Southeast, receiving millions of gallons of wastewater every day. R.M. Clayton is permitted to release up to 100 million gallons of treated wastewater per day into the Chattahoochee River.

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Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's mission is to educate, advocate, and secure the protection and stewardship of the Chattahoochee River, including its lakes, tributaries, and watershed, in order to restore and conserve their ecological health for the people and wildlife that depend on the river system and in recognition of the important ecosystem functions provided throughout the region and planet. For more information, visit www.chattahoochee.org.

The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management provides reliable, high-quality water services in a safe, responsive, and environmentally responsible manner. The Department is dedicated to excellent customer service, professional stewardship of Atlanta's water systems, and the protection of regional water resources and public health while promoting sustainability and economic vitality.

The Southern Environmental Law Center is one of the nation's most powerful defenders of the environment, rooted in the South. With a long track record, SELC takes on the toughest environmental challenges in court, in government, and in our communities to protect our region's air, water, climate, wildlife, lands, and people. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the organization has a staff of 200, including more than 120 legal and policy experts, and is headquartered in Charlottesville, Va., with offices in Asheville, Atlanta, Birmingham, Chapel Hill, Charleston, Nashville, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. selc.org