



CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER®

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Wastewater operator indicted for falsifying reports, polluting Chattahoochee River

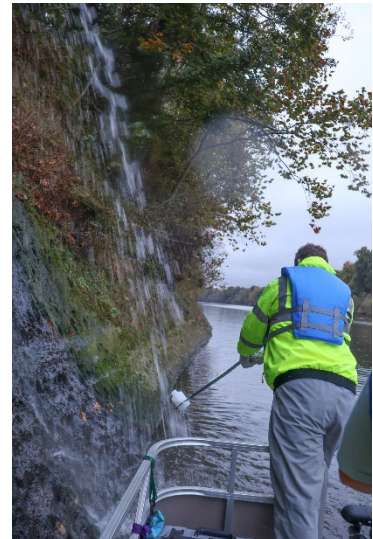
On April 15, 2026, a wastewater treatment plant operator in Georgia [was indicted](#) for allegedly falsifying reports and polluting the Chattahoochee River.

Located in Southwest Georgia along the Alabama border, the Fort Gaines Water Pollution Control Plant is permitted to release up to 300,000 gallons of treated wastewater into the river below Lake Eufaula every day. Under the Clean Water Act, wastewater permits are designed to protect waterways by limiting both the amount of wastewater released each day and the concentration of pollutants, including bacteria, in the discharged water.

In 2024, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) staff observed visible sewage entering the river from a pipe at the Fort Gaines plant. CRK staff regularly collected samples from the pipe's discharge. Laboratory testing confirmed that bacteria levels in the samples far exceeded the plant's permit limits: bacteria levels were on average 600 times higher than the average monthly limits and 300 times higher than the average weekly limits. Publicly available records also revealed ongoing infrastructure issues within the facility.

Despite the testing results and known infrastructure failures, water quality reports sent by the plant's operator to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated no violations of the plant's permit.

Concerned with the great discrepancy between the plant's reported data and CRK's testing results, CRK reported the facility to the EPA Criminal Investigation Division. CRK staff continued to collect samples from the plant's discharge from November 2024 to February 2026. Every sample indicated harmful levels of bacteria, but the plant's reports continued to show compliance with its permit.



CRK staff collects a sample from the pipe at the Fort Gaines plant.



CRK staff holding a sample from the pipe at the Fort Gaines plant on the Chattahoochee River.

On April 15, 2026, the Fort Gaines wastewater treatment operator, Christopher Samuel Jones of Jones Water and Wastewater Consulting, was indicted for criminal violations of the federal Clean Water Act following the EPA investigation.

“This indictment sends a message to wastewater treatment plant operators throughout the Chattahoochee River Basin,” says Riverkeeper and Executive Director Jason Ulseth. “CRK is on the water monitoring every wastewater discharge, and we’re prepared to work with federal agencies to investigate

polluters who falsify reports, harm the river, and endanger people and wildlife.”

In the time since CRK first reported issues at the plant to EPA and EPD, efforts have been made to improve the plant and the quality of the discharge into the Chattahoochee River. In March of 2026, testing conducted by CRK revealed bacteria levels in compliance with the plant’s permit limits for the first time since November 2024. CRK continues regular monitoring at all wastewater treatment plants throughout the Chattahoochee River basin.

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About Chattahoochee Riverkeeper:

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 <https://chattahoochee.org>

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