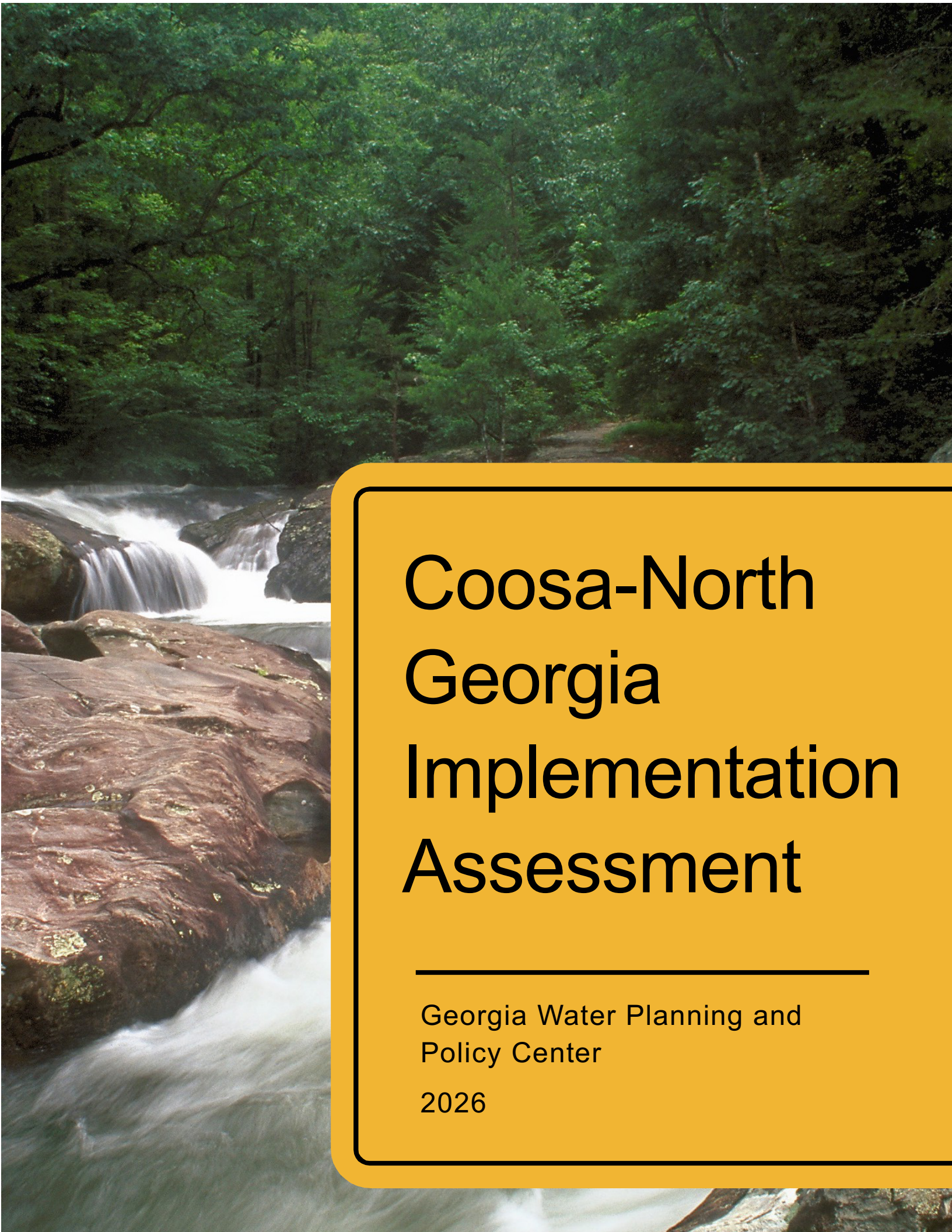




Coosa-North Georgia Implementation Assessment

Georgia Water Planning and
Policy Center

2026

Regional water planning is administered by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center serves as the planning support contractor for the Regional Water Planning Councils.

This report was prepared by the Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center for the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council.

Date: May 2026



Introduction

Of all Georgia's natural resources, none is more important to the future of our state than water. As recognized in Georgia's Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Planning Act, the wise use and management of water is critical to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all.

Regional water plans in Georgia are developed in accordance with the Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan (State Water Plan), which was adopted by the General Assembly in January 2008. The State Water Plan establishes ten water planning regions across the state, each guided by a regional water planning council. These regions do not include the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which has a separate water planning process created by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act of 2001, but the Councils coordinate with the District in their planning.

The State Water Plan calls for the preparation of regional water plans designed to manage water resources in a sustainable manner. The plans are prepared by the regional water planning councils and approved by the Director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD). The plans are reviewed and revised every five years. The 2028 update of Regional Water Plans in Georgia will mark the fourth iteration of the plans. To support the plan update, this report compiles information related to implementation of the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan over the past five years (2020-2025). The objectives for this implementation assessment are to provide the councils, GAEPD, and stakeholders with information about:

- Water-related projects in their regions that support implementation of their management practices
- Progress in implementing and supporting the regional water planning process
- Implementation highlights
- Council priorities for the next plan update

Water Planning in the Coosa-North Georgia Region

The Coosa-North Georgia region includes eighteen counties and portions of five major river basins, listed from west to east: Tennessee, Tallapoosa, Coosa, Chattahoochee, and Savannah Rivers (Figure 1). The Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Council includes members from across this region who represent different backgrounds and perspectives on water use and management in the region. The first regional water plan was adopted in 2011 and subsequently, updated plans were adopted in 2017 and 2023. The review and revision process for the next plan update began in 2026, and the revised plan will be submitted to GAEPD for review in June 2028.

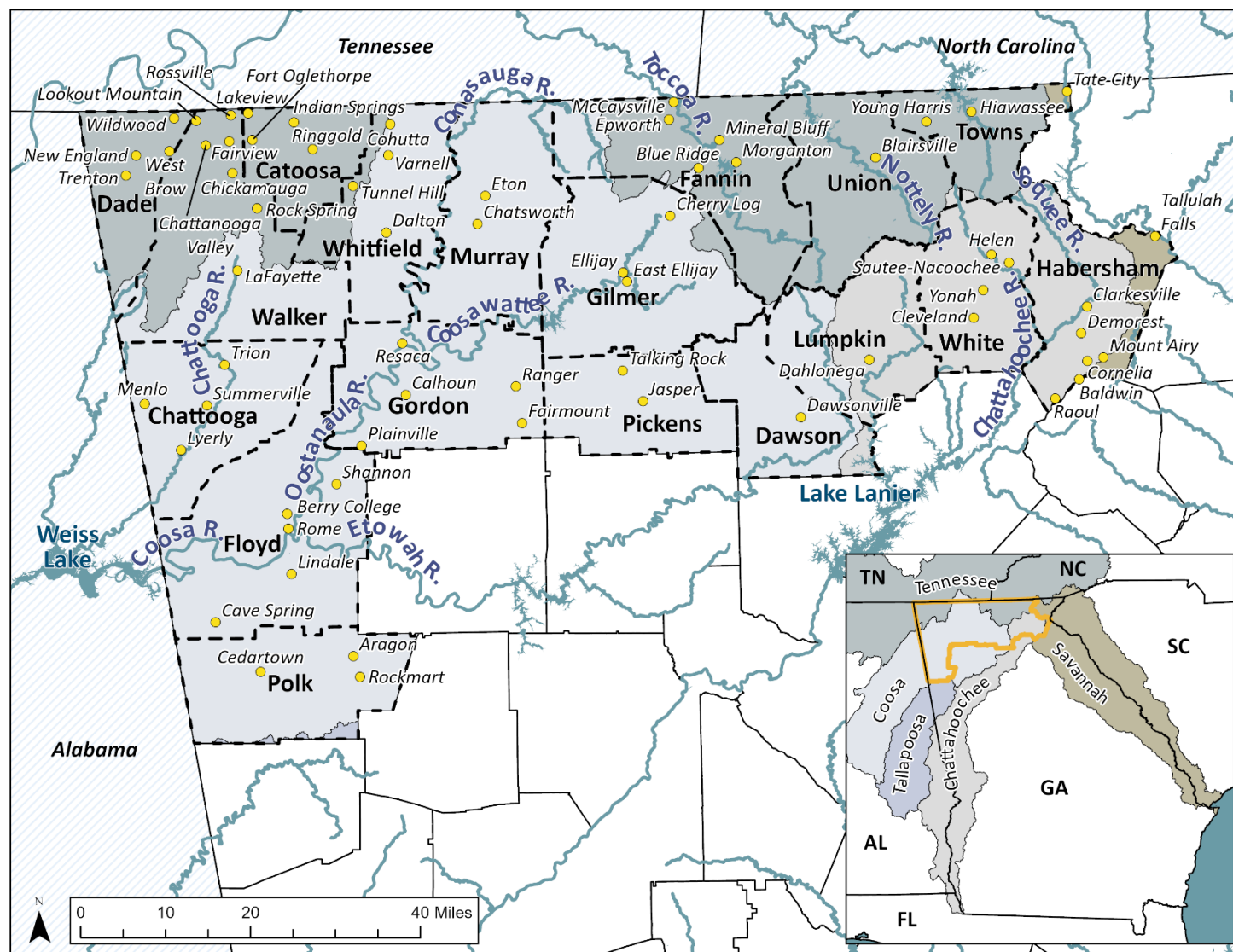


Figure 1. Map of the Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning region. Counties are outlined by the black dashed line and towns and cities are noted with yellow circles. The five river basins in the region flowing to the Gulf of Mexico are in shades of gray, and the one flowing to the Atlantic Ocean is tan.

The process of regional water planning is illustrated in Figure 2. It is guided by the Council's vision and goals (see inset boxes) and informed by technical products that forecast water and wastewater needs and assess water availability (surface water and groundwater) and quality (surface water). The Council selects management practices and makes recommendations for its regional water plan that seek to balance water needs and capacity in alignment with the Council's goals.

Vision: *Enhance the quality of life for all communities through sustainable use of water resources while supporting natural systems in the region and state with partnerships among a broad spectrum of stakeholders.*

Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan -- Goals

1. Plan for appropriate levels of water storage, water sources, and long-term supply to meet anticipated need for local communities.
2. Minimize adverse impacts to local communities and adjacent regions, and, when practicable, enhance natural systems.
3. Ensure that management practices support economic development and optimize existing water and wastewater infrastructure.
4. Promote technologies that conserve, return, and recycle water; protect water quality; and ensure adequate capacity for water storage within the Region.
5. Promote properly managed wastewater discharges.
6. Educate stakeholders in the Region on the importance of water resources, including water conservation, efficiency, pollution prevention, and source water protection.
7. Identify practices that reduce nonpoint source pollution while controlling stormwater to protect and enhance water quality and ecosystems, particularly those in priority watersheds and listed streams.
8. Develop an ongoing adaptive management approach to measure, share, and evaluate water use data and information.

Regional water plans do not sit on a shelf. They are used by GAEPD in making decisions about water and wastewater permits and in guiding GAEPD water resources management decisions in the region. They are also used by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) in prioritizing applications for grants and loans for water infrastructure and conservation projects. For local communities, participation in regional water planning and support for plan implementation are evaluation criteria for WaterFirst designation, which represents the commitment to responsible management of water supply, stormwater, and wastewater above and beyond what is required by the State of Georgia. WaterFirst designees are eligible for a one-percent interest rate reduction for GEFA loans and priority status for 319(h) grants. The regional water plans are also used by others across the region and the state to understand the region's water resources, to inform local water-related management and investments, and to identify water-related research and data priorities.

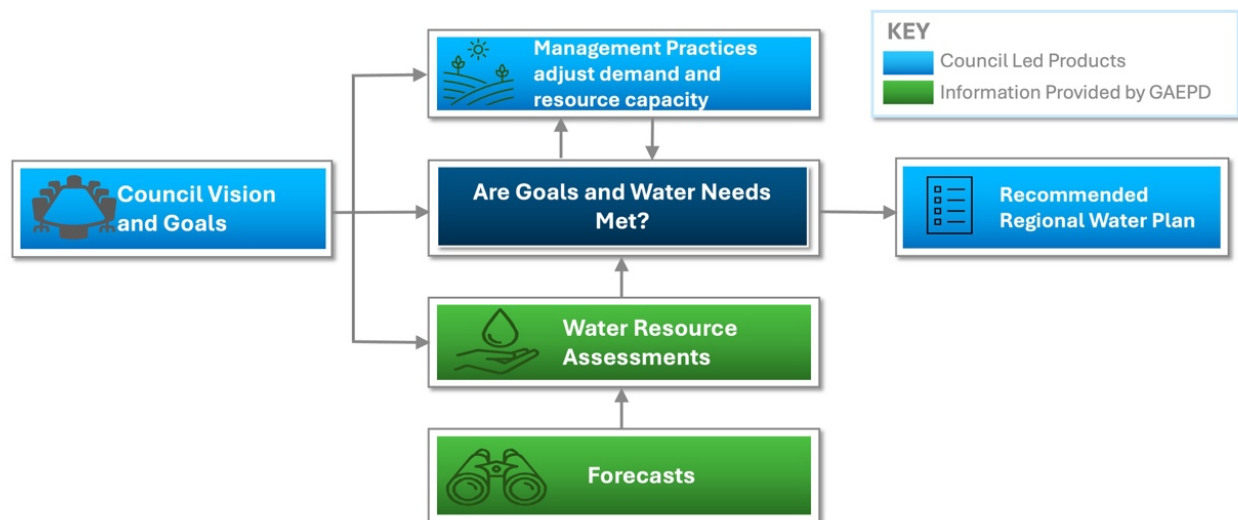


Figure 2. Graphic of the Regional Water Planning Process. The Vision and Goals guide the Council as they identify regional needs and evaluate technical information which is used to update management practices and the regional water plan on a 5-year cycle.

Water Related Projects

There is significant local investment in water and wastewater systems and in the management of surface water and groundwater resources. This report is not a complete inventory of water related projects in each region. Rather, it focuses on projects that have leveraged state and federal funding sources to implement water projects in the region. This focus includes local investment through loans from GEFA, primarily through the Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Funds. It does not include projects that are primarily funded through local sources, including bond revenue, but the Council fully recognizes the critical role that locally funded investments play in effective water management and regional water plan implementation. It would be challenging to accurately reflect all water project investments comprehensively. The projects described in this section illustrate a sampling of projects related to regional water plan implementation.

Several state and federal funding sources were referenced to identify projects from the period of 2020-2025 in the Coosa-North Georgia region that are relevant for water conservation, water supply, wastewater, and water quality and support implementation of the regional water plan:

State or Federal Entity	Programs
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority	Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, Appalachian Regional Commission, Lead Service Line Replacement Program, Emerging Contaminants
Georgia Environmental Protection Division	Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source grants, Regional Water Plan seed grants
Governor's Office of Planning and Budget	American Rescue Plan Act awards
Department of Community Affairs	Community Development Block Grants
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program
Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)	Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Implementation of the Coosa-North Georgia regional water plan benefits from the efforts of the North Georgia Regional Water Resources Partnership. The Partnership was formed in 2001, and the boundaries were updated in 2012 to align with the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council. The Partnership brings together water withdrawal permit holders, local governments, and other entities with an interest in

water issues, and membership dues are used as matching funds for water-related grant projects. The total impact from Seed Grants supported by the Partnership with the Coosa-North Georgia Water Council was more than \$1 million over the past 12 years.

The projects are described in Tables 1 through 14. Their connection to the regional water plan and impacts on water conservation, water supply, and wastewater and water quality are discussed below. Where possible, the projects are tied to specific management practices from Section 6 of the regional water plan; these are indicated with the management practice abbreviations from the plan (e.g., WC-3, WQ-1). To see full descriptions of each management practice, see the [Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan](#). The geographic distribution of the projects is illustrated in the map in Figure 3.

Water Conservation

Water conservation practices help to meet water needs through efficient water use including conservation pricing, metering technologies, efficient residential, commercial, and industrial facilities, etc. There are 30 water providers (of 61) that have implemented conservation rate structures in the Coosa-North Georgia region (Table 1; WC-3). Projects in Dade, Lumpkin, and Fannin Counties updated metering technology through Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loans (Table 2). In the agricultural sector, incentive programs through Natural Resources Conservation Service supported implementation of irrigation technologies to improve water efficiency (Table 3; WC-4). Conservation in the region is not limited to these activities; other water conservation initiatives are implemented at the local level throughout the Coosa-North Georgia region, as demonstrated by the WaterFirst designations (see inset box above).



WaterFirst Designees in the Coosa-North Georgia Region

City of Rome
City of Cornelia

For more information on the program visit the [WaterFirst website](#).

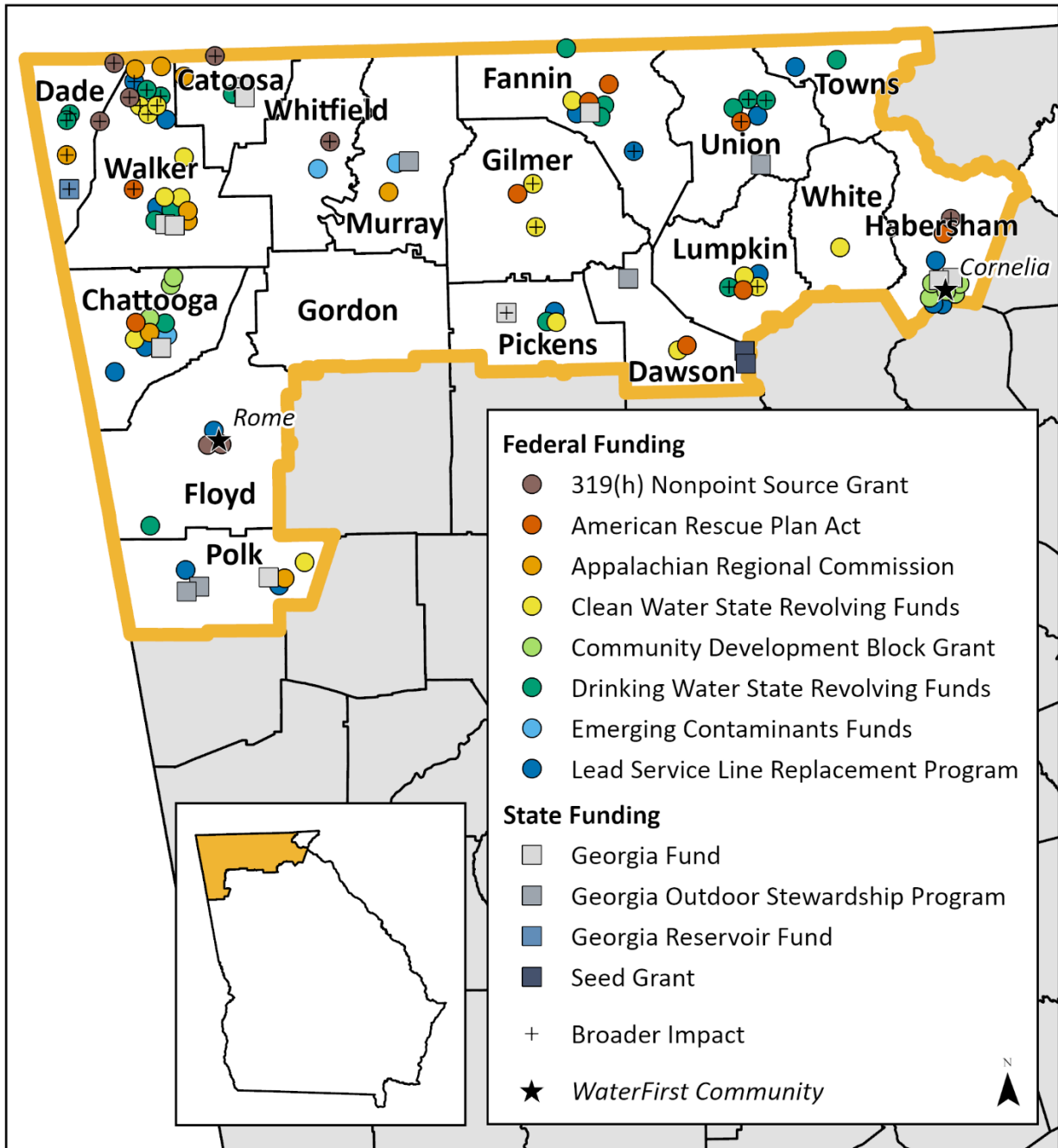


Figure 3. Map of project locations by funding source and WaterFirst Communities in the Coosa-North Georgia Planning Region. Most dots represent specific project locations, but some represent broader geographic implementation in a county. There were two region-wide 319(h) grants and one region-wide seed grant not shown.

Water Supply

The Coosa-North Georgia region primarily relies on surface water resources (e.g., rivers and reservoirs) shared with neighboring states to meet water needs. Recent projects supported improvements or expansion of drinking water systems in Dade, Lumpkin, Union, Walker, Fannin, Towns, Chattooga, Floyd, Pickens, Catoosa, Habersham, Polk Counties (Tables 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8). Chattooga, Fannin, Habersham, Union, and Walker Counties used GEFA funding to inventory for lead service lines in their drinking water systems (Table 9). While not explicitly listed as a management practice but reflected in the goals of the Council, maintenance and updates to water supply infrastructure help to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of water services and the expansions of treatment plants helps to support growing demand and expected development in the region.

In the 2023 Coosa-North Georgia RWP, the Council added language on PFAS and emerging contaminants in Sections 6 and 7 and of the RWP. Since PFAS have been documented in some communities in the Coosa Basin, there are ongoing efforts in coordination with GAEPD to monitor and assess levels, inform the public, and limit exposure. More information on PFAS in Georgia is available through GAEPD¹. In 2023 and 2024 Dalton Utilities, Chatsworth Water Works Commission, and the City of Summerville initiated a project to study and address PFAS in drinking water (Table 10).

Projects that manage stormwater to improve infiltration into groundwater resources also support water supply for the region. The Cities of Cornelia and Fort Oglethorpe implemented projects through Community Development Block Grants and American Rescue Plan Act funding to address stormwater and drainage issues (Tables 4 & 5). Other communities in the region used funds through the Clean Water State Revolving Funds and Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program to combine benefits of outdoor recreation, green spaces, or land conservation on landscapes that naturally infiltrate water (Tables 11 & 12).

The Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan includes a set of administrative management practices aimed at water utility financial measures, planning, and asset management. Projects in Tables 2, 4 through 7, and 10 that support water supply and wastewater upgrades and expansion are implementing the types of infrastructure management encouraged in the administrative practices (AD-1 & AD-3).

1

<https://gaepd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e8f2c6a51c1c41088002350f1eabe598>

Wastewater and Water Quality

The proper management and treatment of wastewater and stormwater help to maintain water quality for rivers, streams, and lakes. During the past five years, projects in eleven counties expanded, upgraded, or rehabilitated wastewater infrastructure: Dawson, Chattooga, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Pickens, Polk, Union, Walker, and White Counties (Tables 4 & 11). Projects in the Cities of Cornelia, Fort Oglethorpe, and Blue Ridge implemented stormwater and drainage infrastructure which can help keep runoff and pollutants from reaching surface water bodies and follows stormwater best management practices for the region (WQ-4; Tables 4, 5, 6, & 7).

Seed grant projects in the Coosa-North Georgia region contributed significantly to the development of nutrient trading in Georgia.² These projects combined with stakeholder input have shaped the current GAEPD nutrient trading guidance, which can be found at <https://epd.georgia.gov/water-quality-trading>. The 2023 seed grant, *Lake Lanier Pilot Nutrient Trading Project*, expanded strategies using the trading guidance for watersheds around the lake (Table 13, WQ – 1, 6, & 7).

The 2022 seed grant, *Lake Lanier Water Quality Evaluation*, looked at a scenario to increase pool level in Lake Lanier for additional drought storage and found that the increased storage did not have a measurable effect on water quality (Table 13). The project addressed three water quality management practices and one water supply practice (WQ-1, 2, & 6 and WS-1). The 2024 seed grant, *Data Assessment to Support Resiliency for Water and Stormwater Infrastructure in the Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning Region*, project evaluated how extreme drought and storm events may impact drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure systems in the future. Outcomes could be used to increase infrastructure resilience through planning in the Coosa-North Georgia region. Overall, seed grants in the region helped to evaluate current and future opportunities to maintain water quality and secure water supply in the Coosa-North Georgia region.

There were multiple initiatives through land acquisition, management, and planning in the region that support water quality in rivers and streams. The Nature Conservancy purchased the Hurley Tract and land in the Dugdown Corridor for conservation through Clean Water State Revolving Funds funding (Table 11, WQ-2). Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program funds were used to acquire: The Conservation Fund Tract to extend Amicalola Falls State Park, land for Treat Mountain Wildlife Management Area and Tallapoosa River Wildlife Management Area (in the Dugdown Corridor), the Springbank Tract to extend the Conasauga Wildlife Management Area, and Treat Mountain tracts (in the Dugdown Corridor) (Table 12, WQ-5). Protecting forested lands

² These seed grants are not listed in Table 13 because they were initiated before the period addressed in this implementation assessment: 2020-2025.

and lands around streams protects riparian buffers, water quality, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and supports floodplain management (WQ-5),

Over the past five years there have been at least five watershed management plans developed in the region: Lookout Creek, Etowah and Oostanaula Rivers near Rome, South Chickamauga headwaters, Chattanooga Creek, Coahulla Creek, and Soque River (Table 14). The watershed management plans include actions items to address water quality concerns in a specific location, and they also implement management practices in the regional water plan concerning nutrient management (WQ-1; Table 14), stormwater best management practices (WQ-4; Table 14), and directed actions for water quality parameters in 303(d) listed stream (WQ-6; Table 14).

Agricultural best management practices support water quality practices in the Coosa-North Georgia region. In the past five years, these practices implemented through NRCS programs included crop cover, fencing, protection areas, nutrient management, and waste storage facilities to reduce erosion and nutrient pollution to surface waters (Table 3, WQ-1).

Table 1. Summary of water rate structures in the Coosa-North Georgia Region. The water and wastewater rates dashboard was developed through a collaboration between the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government and GEFA.

Rate Structure	Definition	Number of Water Providers
Conservation Pricing: - Increasing Block - Uniform at One Block's Rate	- Unit price of each succeeding block of usage is charged at a higher unit rate than the previous blocks - Consumer pays one rate per unit, but that rate is determined by their total usage	30
Decreasing Block	Unit price of each succeeding block of usage is charged at a lower unit rate than the previous blocks	1
Uniform Rate	Constant per unit cost	29
Increasing/Decreasing Block	Rates increase over an initial range and decrease over subsequent ranges, or vice versa	1

Data and definitions from <https://georgiawaterrates.org/>

Table 2. Drinking Water State Revolving funds in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is a federally funded loan program for drinking water infrastructure administered by GEFA. The program finances upgrades, maintenance, and expansion of water infrastructure.

Fiscal Year	Community/Utility	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2021	Dade County Water and Sewer Authority	Dade	Upgrading water main and pump stations, repairing two water tanks, installing a new automatic meter reading system	Water Supply	\$3,707,420
2021	Dade County Water and Sewer Authority	Dade	Upgrading water main and pump stations, repairing two water tanks, installing a new automatic meter reading system Increase to an existing loan	Water Supply	\$1,124,580
2021	Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority	Lumpkin	Extending and replacing water main, developing wells, renovating wells, upgrading the supervisory control and data acquisition system, installing an automatic meter reading system, installing storage tanks, and installing interconnections	Water Supply WS-1	\$2,500,000

2021	Coosa Water Authority	Union	Replacing the water lines	Water Supply	\$1,400,000
2021	City of LaFayette	Walker	Demolition, rehabilitation, and expansion of current facilities Increase to an existing loan	Water Supply	\$460,000
2021	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Upgrading the Chickamauga Water Treatment Plant	Water Supply	\$11,400,000
2022	City of McCaysville	Fannin	Installing an automatic meter reading system	Water Supply, Water Conservation	\$1,115,000
2022	Coosa Water Authority	Union	Replacing leaking lines Increase to an existing loan	Water Supply	\$1,015,000
2023	City of Hiawassee	Towns	Upgrading the water treatment plant	Water Supply	\$1,102,000
2023	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Upgrading the Chickamauga Water Treatment Plant	Water Supply	\$13,000,000
2024	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Installing a new well and related appurtenances	Water Supply WS-1	\$2,000,000
2024	City of Blue Ridge	Fannin	Improvements to the existing Eagles Nest booster pump station, installation of SCADA equipment, electrical control upgrades, and related appurtenances	Water Supply	\$600,000
2024	City of Blue Ridge	Fannin	Rehabilitating the existing Mountain Tops booster pump station and installing SCADA and VFD equipment, electrical control upgrades, and other related appurtenances	Water Supply	\$350,000
2024	City of Cave Spring	Floyd	Replacing waterlines, improving the water distribution system, and related appurtenances	Water Supply	\$12,000,000
2024	City of LaFayette	Walker	Rehabilitating the water treatment plant and related appurtenances	Water Supply	\$506,000

2025	City of Blairsville	Union	Install and test new wells	Water Supply WS-1	\$700,000
2025	City of Jasper	Pickens	Extend water mains, add valves, and upgrade the water treatment plant	Water Supply	\$3,500,000
2025	City of Ringgold	Catoosa	Construct a well, install an elevated storage tank, rehabilitate a water distribution system, and install SCADA	Water Supply WS-1	3,700,000

Table 3. Natural Resources Conservation Service grants in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. Natural Resources Conservation Service administers cost-share incentive programs and technical assistance to support landowners in addressing conservation and natural resource concerns through the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

NRCS Program	# of Contracts	Funds for Water Quality	Funds for Water Quantity	Total Funds
Conservation Stewardship Program	12	\$4,177	\$0	\$4,177
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	387	\$1,733,124	\$153,785	\$1,886,909

Table 4. Water related American Rescue Plan funding in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. The American Rescue Plan Act is a federal COVID-19 relief bill passed in 2021 with funds distributed by the State.

Community	County	Proposed Action	Plan Element	Total Funds
Blue Ridge	Fannin	Replace water mains and reconnect homes to address substandard materials	Water Supply	\$1,565,000
Clarksville	Habersham	Add water line to connect to safe and reliable water source	Water Supply	\$843,793
Dawsonville	Dawson	Construct a new wastewater treatment plant to replace existing land application system	Wastewater Water Quality	\$10,800,000
Fannin County Water Authority	Fannin	Install water mains, water meters, fire hydrants, and other necessary appurtenances	Water Supply	\$411,015

Gilmer County	Gilmer	Fix aging pumps and transmission lines to address operational issues at the solid waste landfill	Water Supply Water Quality	\$315,069
Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority	Lumpkin	Construct new wastewater treatment plant along with a new pump station and force main to support a new community hospital	Wastewater Water Quality	\$17,107,770
Summerville	Chattooga	Replace the main trunk line including the sewer main and the manholes	Wastewater Water Quality	\$1,262,594
Union County	Union	Make improvements to the water system	Water Supply	\$2,359,000
Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Expand water treatment plant	Water Supply	\$49,000,000

Table 5. Water related Community Development Block Grant projects in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. Community Development Block Grant is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to support economic and infrastructure projects to benefit low- to moderate-income residents.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Management Measures Addressed	Total Assistance Agreement
2020	Chattooga County	Chattooga	Water improvements	Water Supply	\$750,000
2021	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Street, drainage, sewer, and water system improvements	Wastewater, Water Quality, Water Supply WQ-4	\$750,000
2022	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Water, sewer, and street improvements	Wastewater, Water Supply	\$850,000
2023	Chattooga County	Chattooga	Water improvements	Water Supply	\$1,000,000
2023	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Water and sewer improvements	Water Supply, Wastewater, Water Quality	\$1,000,000
2024	City of Cornelia and Habersham County	Habersham	Water improvements	Water Supply	\$1,000,000
2024	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Sewer improvements	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$1,000,000

2025	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Water, sewer, street, and drainage improvements	Water Supply, Wastewater, Water Quality WQ-4	\$1,000,000
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Table 6. Appalachian Regional Commission water and sewer infrastructure grants, managed by GEFA, in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. The Appalachian Regional Commission is a partnership between 13 states that span Appalachia and the federal government, with 37 counties in Georgia.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2020	City of Rockmart	Polk	Water and Sewer System Improvements	Water Supply, Wastewater, Water Quality	\$600,000
2020	City of LaFayette	Walker	Shattuck Industrial Pump Station Replacement	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$600,000
2021	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Water Transmission Line	Water Supply	\$600,000
2021	City of Lookout Mountain	Walker	Rehabilitate an existing pump station and construct one new pump station to support economic growth	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$600,000
2021	City of Rossville	Walker	Sewer Rehab Project-Phase One	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$461,936
2023	City of LaFayette	Walker	Replace the existing aeration system and related appurtenances	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$1,000,000
2023	Dade County Water and Sewer Authority	Dade	Water Main Upgrades	Water Supply	\$618,250
2024	City of Fort Oglethorpe	Catoosa, Walker	Oglethorpe Historic District Water and Storm Water Improvements	Water Supply, Water Quality WQ-4	\$1,000,000
2025	Murray County	Murray	Murray County South Industrial Park Phase 2	Water Supply	\$572,582

Table 7. The Georgia Fund projects in the Coastal Georgia region: 2020-2025. The Georgia Fund is a state funded program administered by GEFA that provides low-interest loans for water, wastewater, sewer, solid-waste, and land-conservation infrastructure. It can also be used for emergency loans for public health or environmental issues.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2024	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Water system improvement to provide fire flow and redundancy to water pollution control plant	Water Supply Water Quality	\$3,246,000
2024	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Pump replacement at Hazel Creek intake	Water Supply	\$1,329,200
2020	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Installation of water transmission main, deep wells, and related appurtenances at Racoon Creek WTP	Water supply	\$1,250,000
2025	City of LaFayette	Walker	Water main construction	Water Supply	\$967,000
2023	City of LaFayette	Walker	Replacement of aeration system and other appurtenances	Wastewater Water Quality	\$1,667,000
2020	City of Ringgold	Catoosa	Construct water storage tank, install water lines, and related appurtenances	Water supply	\$2,002,000
2023	City of Ringgold	Catoosa	Construct water storage tank, install water lines, and related appurtenances	Water supply	\$610,900
2024	City of Blue Ridge	Fannin	Stormwater improvements	Water Quality WQ-4	\$2,000,000
2021	City of Rockmart	Polk	Upgrade the water pollution control plant, install water lines, and related appurtenances	Wastewater Water Quality	\$670,000
2021	Pickens County	Pickens	Install sewer main, a pump station, and related appurtenances		\$525,000

Table 8. Georgia Reservoir Fund project in the Coosa-North Georgia region. The program is state funded and finances water-supply projects.

Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
Dade County Board of Commissioners	Dade	Administrative funding for purchase of approximately 64 acres for construction of reservoir	Water Supply	\$ 328,445

Table 9. The Lead Service Line Replacement Program funds in the Coosa-North Georgia Region: 2020-2025. The Lead Service Line Replacement Program funds are administered by GEFA as grants or loans and only finance lead service line inventory and replacement projects.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2023	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$285,000
2024	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$195,000
2024	City of LaFayette	Walker	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$100,000
2024	City of Blue Ridge	Fannin	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$40,500
2024	Fannin County Water Authority	Fannin	Lead Service Line Inventory	Water Supply	\$15,000
2024	Town of Lyerly	Chattooga	Lead Service Line Inventory	Water Supply	\$58,000
2024	City of Demorest	Habersham	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$100,000
2024	City of Blairsville	Union	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$30,000
2024	City of Cedartown	Polk	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$203,550

2024	City of Chickamauga	Walker	Replace existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$400,000
2024	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$78,495
2024	City of Dahlonega	Lumpkin	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$66,000
2024	City of Jasper	Pickens	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$63,525
2024	City of Rockmart	Polk	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$93,500
2024	City of Rome	Floyd	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$200,000
2024	City of Young Harris	Towns	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$28,650
2025	City of Cornelia	Habersham	Inventory to identify existing lead service lines in its drinking water system	Water Supply	\$244,000

Table 10. Clean Water Emerging Contaminants and Drinking Water Emerging Contaminants funds in the Coosa-North Georgia region. Federal funds for emerging contaminants, such as PFAS, were authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and are administered by GEFA.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2023	Dalton Utilities	Whitfield	Pilot study for the removal and destruction of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)	Water Supply	\$1,581,000
2023	Chatsworth Water Works Commission	Murray	Construction of new reverse osmosis plant or rehabilitation of existing water plants to meet PFAS regulations.	Water Supply	\$10,804,000
2024	City of Summerville	Chattooga	PFAS Pilot Project	Water Supply	\$3,500,000

Table 11. Clean Water State Revolving Fund in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund is a federally funded loan program for wastewater infrastructure and pollution prevention administered by GEFA. The program primarily finances infrastructure upgrades, maintenance, and expansion; some projects also support land conservation as a non-point source pollution control.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Assistance Agreement
2020	Gilmer County	Gilmer	This project will replace lift station pumps, transmission main, and related appurtenances	Water Quality	\$ 286,427
2021	City of Blue Ridge	Fannin	Rehabilitating the water pollution control plant	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$5,000,000
2021	Gilmer County	Gilmer	Replacing life station pumps and transmission main	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$755,000
2021	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Constructing 3 pump stations and installing sewer main	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$9,000,000
2021	City of Cleveland	White	Expanding and upgrading the wastewater treatment plant	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$12,656,000
2022	The Nature Conservancy	Polk, *Haralson, *Paulding	Purchasing land in Dugdown Corridor for permanent conservation	Water Quality, Water Supply WQ-5	\$4,600,000
2023	Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority	Lumpkin	Planning, designing, and permitting services to construct a new wastewater treatment plant	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$825,000
2023	City of LaFayette	Walker	Replacing a pump station and installing sewer lines	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$1,350,000
2023	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Constructing new pump stations, installing sewer mains, and making improvements to the Walker County Wastewater Treatment Plant	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$10,000,000
2024	The Nature Conservancy Georgia		Purchasing the Hurley Tract for permanent conservation	Water Quality, Water Supply WQ – 5	\$332,260

2024	City of Summerville	Chattooga	Installing new sewer lines to address inflow and infiltration	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$3,000,000
2024	Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority	Lumpkin	Constructing a new water reclamation facility and upgrading the collection system	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$3,003,565
2024	Etowah Water and Sewerage Authority	Dawson	Expanding the Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) and related appurtenances	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$10,000,000
2025	City of Jasper	Pickens	Constructing a new master lift station, installing sewer lines, and upgrading the sewer distribution system which will help to correct inflow and infiltration	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$4,500,000
2025	Cit of LaFayette	Walker	Replacing sewer lines and manholes which will reduce inflow and infiltration	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$2,409,000
2025	Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority	Walker	Constructing three pump stations, installing a sewer main, and making improvements to the Walker County Wastewater Treatment Plant Increase to an existing loan	Wastewater, Water Quality	\$4,000,000

* Spans multiple planning regions

Table 12. The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) funds in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program is a state funded program administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to support parks, trails, and protect and acquire lands for wildlife, clean water, and outdoor recreation.

Fiscal Year	Community	County	Action	Plan Element	Total Funds
2021	Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Union	Upgrading sewer system, mulching and grassing to reduce erosion, and other improvements at Vogel State Park	Water Quality	\$2,609,859

2022	Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Dawson	Acquisition of The Conservation Fund Tract extending Amicalola Falls State Park	Water Supply Water Quality WQ-5	\$5,100,000
2023	Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Polk, *Haralson	Acquisition of land for Treat Mountain WMA and Tallapoosa River WMA in the Dugdown Mountain Corridor	Water Supply Water Quality WQ-5	\$5,650,000
2024	Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Murray	Conasauga Wildlife Management Area - Acquisition of property known as the Spring bank Tract located in the City of Chatsworth	Water Supply Water Quality WQ-5	\$550,000
2024	Georgia Department of Natural Resources*	Polk, *Haralson	Acquisition of Treat Mountain tracts in Dugdown Mountain Corridor	Water Supply Water Quality WQ-5	\$2,100,000

*Spans multiple planning regions

Table 13. Seed grants in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. Regional Water Planning Seed Grants, which are administered by GAEPD, support activities that help to implement regional water plans.

Start Year	End Year	Grantee	Project	Plan Element	Total Funds
2022	2023	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	Lake Lanier Water Quality Evaluation	Water Quality WQ-1 WQ-2 WQ-6 WS-1	\$140,000
2023	2024	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	Lake Lanier Pilot Nutrient Trading Project	Water Quality WQ-1 WQ-6 WQ-7	\$125,050
2024	2025	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	Data Assessment to Support Resiliency for Water and Stormwater Infrastructure in the Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning Region	Water Quality WQ-3	\$100,000

Table 14. Georgia Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants in the Coosa-North Georgia region: 2020-2025. 319(h) grants support nonpoint source pollution control projects, including green infrastructure and watershed management plans. Projects include up to 60% federal funds, with the remainder as local match.

Fiscal Year	Primary Subgrantee	County	Project Title	Plan Element	Total Funds
2020	Georgia Wildlife Resources Division	Region wide	Increasing Capacity of the Freshwater Biodiversity Program for Stream Restoration Activities in Northeast Georgia - PART 1	Water Quality	\$162,025
2020	Limestone Valley RC&D	Dade, Walker	Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project Phase 2 - PART 2	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 4	\$104,346
2020	City of Rome	Floyd	Phase 1 – Implementation of the Watershed Management Plan for Tributaries in Rome, Georgia at the Etowah and Oostanaula River Confluence - PART 1	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 4	\$649,138
2021	Limestone Valley RC&D	Catoosa, Walker, Whitfield	South Chickamauga Headwaters Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 3	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 4	\$573,971
2022	Limestone Valley RC&D	Walker	Implementation of Chattanooga Creek Watershed Management Plan for Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements - PART 2	Water Quality WQ – 1	\$123,894
2022	Limestone Valley RC&D	Whitfield	Phase 2 Coahulla Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation - PART 2	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 4	\$183,408
2022	Limestone Valley RC&D	Dade, Walker	Phase 3 Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project	Water Quality WQ – 1	\$482,600
2023	Georgia Wildlife Resources Division	Region Wide	WRD Freshwater Biodiversity Program - Increasing Capacity for Stream Restoration Activities in Northeast Georgia	Water Quality	\$279,996
2023	Habersham County Board of Commissioners	Habersham	2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Data and Assessment Update and Roadmap Re-Write	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 6	\$125,000

2023	City of Rome	Floyd	Phase 1 – Implementation of the Watershed Management Plan for Tributaries in Rome, Georgia at the Etowah and Oostanaula River Confluence - PART 2	Water Quality WQ – 1 WQ – 4	\$512,926
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Implementation Highlight: Reservoir expansion supports water supply resilience in North Georgia: decades in the making



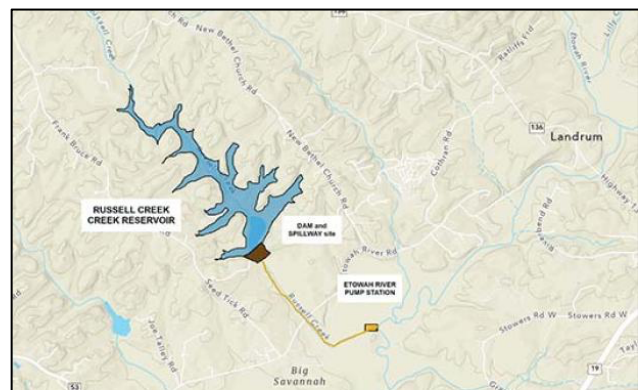
Artist rendering of Russell Creek Reservoir design. Credit: Etowah Water and Sewer Authority

The process to plan and build Russell Creek Reservoir started in 2005 and broke ground in 2025. This 20-year effort to expand water storage in Dawson County was led by the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority and made possible by committed partners like USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and others.

With expected growth in parts of North Georgia, the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan identifies the need for identify

additional water supply sources (WS-1). In addition, water utilities like the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority, are motivated to invest in long-term planning for drought to support water security when supply is most limited. The project is a pumped storage reservoir located on Russell Creek, southeast of Dawsonville, that will use water from the Etowah River. The reservoir construction includes replacing an existing dam and designing a new dam that will expand storage to 1.3 billion gallons of water², more than 8 times the current storage volume.

Investing in water supply directly support the Goals of the Coosa-North Georgia Council: “Plan[ing] for appropriate levels of water storage, water sources, and long-term supply to meet anticipated need for local communities [and] ensure[ing] that management practices support economic development and optimize existing water and wastewater infrastructure.”



Map of Russel Creek Reservoir and pump station from the Etowah River. Credit: Natural Resources Conservation

1. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/watershed-protection-and-flood-prevention-operations-program/news/russell>
2. https://smokesignalsnews.com/news/groundbreaking-for-russell-creek-water-reservoir-to-help-assure-water-supply/article_f9ff899f-6820-469b-b7f9-ca4dd98c0c58.html

Updates to Water Resource Assessments

Regional water planning relies on several models of water availability and quality that inform council members about water resource conditions. GAEPD has developed and improved these models over the past three planning cycles and continues to make further updates to support the work of the councils.

Surface Water Availability Model

The Basin Environmental Assessment Model (BEAM) supports the councils in understanding the quantity of water available across their regions to support water users and address instream needs. The development of BEAM for the 2023 Plan update greatly refined spatial resolution for surface water availability modeling. BEAM shows council members which water users might face a challenge in meeting current and forecasted water needs. Councils can also track water availability relative to in-stream flow and reservoir level metrics.

Several updates to BEAM are currently underway to support the councils in the next planning cycle that will:

- Improve simulation of complex water supply systems by incorporating more detailed operations
- Quantify water supply reservoir storage capacities for systems with missing information
- Use paleohydrology to examine extreme conditions before the period of record for the stream gages used in developing BEAM
- Expand the range of future scenario conditions that can be modeled to capture uncertainties

Surface Water Quality Models

GAEPD uses several surface water quality models to support regional water planning, including river, lake, estuary, and watershed models. Some of these models are steady state with a constant critical flow and temperature, such as GA DOSAG and GA ESTUARY; whereas, others are hydrodynamic with varying flow, water quality and meteorological conditions, such as RIV-1, LSPC, EFDC, and WASP. The river models are used to assess assimilative capacity by modeling the effect of organic matter and ammonia on dissolved oxygen (DO) in rivers and streams. The watershed models are used to simulate the delivery of nutrients and organic loads to modelled rivers, lakes, and estuaries. The lake and estuary models are used to evaluate chlorophyll-a and DO responses to nutrient and organic loadings in these receiving waterbodies.

These models are continuously updated by GAEPD to reflect changes in weather patterns, land use, water quality criteria and designated uses. The inputs for these water quality models align with BEAM to reflect a high spatial and temporal

resolution regarding flows and water quality in the state's waters. The water quality models and water quality monitoring support the councils in understanding how the waterbodies in their regions support water supply, recreation, and fishing uses, and provide wastewater assimilation.

GAEPD is developing nutrient criteria for major public lake (>500 acres) in the state using these models to support understanding of nutrient dynamics and water quality concerns. Lake chlorophyll and/or nutrient criteria have been developed for eleven major lakes and will be developed for seventeen additional lakes. The water quality models will also be used to develop nutrient criteria for the state's estuaries.

Groundwater Availability Models

The geology is complex in the northern half of Georgia in the Valley and Ridge and Piedmont geologic provinces of Georgia, where the Coosa-North Georgia region is located. Groundwater is found in the Paleozoic aquifer or Crystalline-rock aquifer and exists predominantly in fractures in the rocks and in the overlying saprolite. The yield from these sources is typically limited and groundwater tends to be a supplemental source, with a few exceptions. Because of the nature of the geology and the lower groundwater yields, the Paleozoic aquifer and Crystalline-rock aquifer are not modeled.

Looking Ahead for the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning

The projects described in the previous sections illustrate the work and investments through state and federal funds that have implemented elements of the regional water plan over the last five years. As noted above, local investment also plays a critical role in supporting water management that helps to implement the regional water plan.

Looking ahead to the 2028 regional water plan update, the Council and stakeholders have identified initial priorities for the next revision of the Coosa-North Georgia regional water plan. These topics reflect emerging questions, shared interests, and opportunities to strengthen understanding of water resource management in the region:

Water quality and source water protection. Planning and understanding management needs for emerging contaminants, like PFAS, remains a priority for the council. Council members also expressed the importances of addressing stormwater management, non-point source pollution in the region, and revisiting TMDL standards.

Future water supply and wastewater resiliency. The council discussed how to plan and manage for water supply and wastewater with a lens for sustainable water management that can support economic opportunities and is responsive to changing industry and economic development. Some factors considered were growing demand with limited water resources, aging infrastructure, managing septic systems and septage, and challenges during flood and drought cycles.

Communication and collaboration. Council members expressed interest in working more closely with stakeholders in the region, in increasing collaboration with other water council regions, and in inter-state collaboration on water resources.

These topics are not commitments for the council, but starting points for analysis, discussion, coordination, and policy development. By engaging with these issues and continuing its ongoing assessment and planning efforts, the Council seeks to support quality of life for all communities in the region.