

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUBJECT: Section 319(h) Grant for the Soque River Watershed – Subaward Agreement Signing

DATE: September 3, 2026

☒ **RECOMMENDATION**

☐ **POLICY DISCUSSION**

BUDGET INFORMATION:

☐ **STATUS REPORT**

OVER THREE FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS

☐ **OTHER**

FEDERAL FUNDING: \$499,952

TOTAL MATCH AMOUNT: \$333,302

- **SOQUE RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION CASH AND IN-KIND MATCH: \$170,030**
- **BLACKHAWK FLY-FISHING PROPERTY OWNER CASH MATCH: \$75,000**
- **HABERSHAM COUNTY (IN-KIND ADMINISTRATIVE MATCH OVER THREE YEARS): \$88,272**

TOTAL PROJECT: \$833,254

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: September 21, 2026

PURPOSE: To approve the subaward agreement for FY25 Section 319(h) grant funding for the Soque River Watershed Association.

BACKGROUND / HISTORY: Habersham County is currently partnering with the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) using Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 grant funding from Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act to update the 2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan (WPP). Final updates to the WPP were completed in February 2026. As a result of the updated Watershed Protection Plan, we now qualify for further Section 319(h) federal funding from FFY2025. The FFY2025 subaward agreement proposes to use this additional funding to implement priority recommendations from the updated Watershed Protection Plan, including key stream restoration and stormwater management projects on private property belonging to a business that caters to fishing tourism along the Soque River. These efforts will target sources of fish population degradation as well as bacteria loading in that segment of the Soque River. The river and its tributaries supply drinking water and support agriculture and tourism throughout Habersham County.

FACTS AND ISSUES:

- a. The physical subaward agreement does not need to be signed. The official offer package will be routed electronically from the GAEPD Director's Office via SignNow once the agreement is approved.
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- b. If the agreement is approved, the County will need to provide a signed and notarized Contractor Affidavit (E-Verify) which will then be included with the official offer package.
 - c. The subaward agreement up for signature will be for funding awarded in FFY2025 to Habersham County and which will be immediately available.
 - d. The FFY2025 funding will help the SRWA implement the Soque River Watershed Protection Plan.
 - e. Habersham County will act as a pass-through entity for SRWA and will provide administrative reporting functions for the project.
 - f. Habersham County would provide in-kind matching through administrative functions (no cash outlay).
 - g. Cash match would come from the SRWA and Blackhawk Fly-Fishing, the private business owner who will benefit from stormwater management installations on the premises.
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OPTIONS:

- 1) Approve the subaward agreement for FFY25 319(h) funding for the Soque River Watershed Association.
 - 2) Deny the subaward agreement for FFY25 319(h) funding for the Soque River Watershed Association.
 - 3) Commission defined alternative.
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RECOMMENDED SAMPLE MOTION: Move to approve the subaward agreement for FFY25 319(h) funding for the Soque River Watershed Association.

DEPARTMENT:

Prepared by: Katherine DeVane

Director _____

**ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMENTS:** _____

DATE: _____

County Manager

SUBAWARD AGREEMENT

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION
AND
HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR
*IMPLEMENT 2026 SOQUE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN –
BLACK HAWK FLY-FISHING MITIGATION PROJECT*
UNDER
CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 319(h)
NONPOINT SOURCE IMPLEMENTATION GRANT
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE LISTING: 66.460
FEDERAL AWARD IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 02D53825
FEDERAL AWARD DATE: 01/15/2026
FEDERAL BUDGET PERIOD: 07/01/2025 TO 06/30/2030**

This Subaward Agreement (“Agreement”) is made and entered into as of the 1st day of OCTOBER 2026 (“Effective Date”), by and between the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (“Division”), recipient of the Federal assistance identified above (“Award”); and Habersham County Board of Commissioners, a subrecipient of the Award (hereinafter called “Subrecipient”). The Award is not for research and development. The person(s) executing this Agreement on behalf of the Subrecipient has authority to bind the Subrecipient to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. The Director of the Division is authorized by law to execute this Agreement. Terms herein shall have the definition provided. If no definition is provided, terms shall be defined by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500; the Rules and Regulations of the United States Environmental Protection Agency; the Rules and Regulations of the Division; or other State or Federal law as context may require, as such provisions exist as of the Effective Date. If no such definition applies, said terms shall have their common meaning.

WHEREAS, the Division desires to engage the Subrecipient to render certain services hereafter described in connection with an undertaking (hereinafter referred to as the “Project”) which will be financed through Federal assistance or grants authorized under Section 319 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) Amendments of 1987 and administered by the Division; and

WHEREAS, Subrecipient desires to perform such services for the Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the valuable and mutual benefits flowing to each party as described below, the parties hereto mutually agree as follows:

1. **Engagement of Subrecipient.** The Division hereby agrees to engage the Subrecipient and the Subrecipient hereby agrees to perform the services set forth herein in fulfillment of this Agreement.
2. **Scope of Work.** In performance of the Project, the Subrecipient shall perform services and conduct

work as described in the attached Appendix A: Scope of Work, which is incorporated herein and is made a part of this Agreement by reference.

3. **Term; Time of Performance.** The period of performance (“Term”) of this Agreement shall commence upon the Effective Date and shall terminate upon the earlier of (i) the completion of the services and work identified in Appendix A; or (ii) SEPTEMBER 30, 2029 (hereinafter referred to as “Termination Date”), unless sooner terminated by the Division or renewed by the Division in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement. The services of the Subrecipient are to commence as soon as practicable after the Effective Date and shall be undertaken in accordance with the timeline for completion of tasks included in the attached Appendix B: Project Schedule, which is incorporated herein and made a part of this Agreement by reference.
4. **Compensation.** The Division agrees to remit a subaward amount to Subrecipient in consideration of the services performed under this Agreement not to exceed FIVE HUNDRED TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEEN dollars, \$502,416.00. The subaward amount shall be paid in accordance with the budget described in Appendix A. Any changes to the subaward amount shall be made in a writing executed in accordance with the terms of Paragraph 35.
5. **In Kind Match.** The Subrecipient will contribute a minimum of the equivalent of forty percent (40%) of the total Project cost, in services or cash contributions, toward the performance of services described in Appendix A.
6. **Indirect Cost Rate.** The indirect cost rate for the Award shall be the de minimis rate in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414].
7. **Method of Payment.** The Division will pay Subrecipient for work performed under this Agreement not to exceed the amount(s) described in Paragraph 4, and in accordance with the terms described in this Paragraph:
 - a. Payment will only be made for the services described in Appendix A.
 - b. Subrecipient shall be paid quarterly unless a request for ADVANCE has been submitted with verifying documentation (*see* subparagraph c below). No later than the 15th day of the month following close of the immediately preceding quarter, Subrecipient shall submit to the Division contact specified in Paragraph 37 an invoice for services rendered in that immediate preceding quarter, accompanied by a progress report describing the services performed and identifying the related items or tasks in Appendix A, specifying that the services have been performed in accordance with this Agreement, and accompanied by any documentation, outputs, deliverables, or close-out reports.
 - c. The Subrecipient shall certify in writing the accuracy of each invoice. All invoices from the Subrecipient should show detailed line items referencing the costs of labor, materials, property, equipment, installation, services, incidentals, etc. All invoices should be signed and dated by authorized personnel as evidence of review and approval prior to submission to the Division for reimbursement or ADVANCE payment.
 - d. The Division will review, and approve or deny invoices within thirty (30) days of receipt. Payment shall be made upon determination by the Division that items required by Appendix A and this Agreement, including deliverables and reporting requirements of various categories and kinds of information for the period, are sufficient. Any invoice not approved

by the Division shall not be paid.

- e. Payment of the final 10 percent (10%) of the subaward amount shall not be due and payable until the entire scope of work described in Appendix A is completed and the Division has accepted and approved the final products, reports, and invoices.
8. **Credit.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, the Subrecipient acknowledges that the Division, as an agency of the State of Georgia, is prohibited from pledging the State's credit.
9. **Funding.** The Subrecipient acknowledges that this Agreement is funded with Federal assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("USEPA").
 - a. As provided by 2 CFR 200.340, the Award may be terminated in part, or in its entirety. In the event the Award is terminated in part, or in its entirety under 2 CFR 200.340, the parties acknowledge that they remain responsible for compliance with the closeout requirements of 2 CFR 200.344, and 2 CFR 200.345.
 - b. In the event that the Award is terminated pursuant to subparagraph (a) above, or the Division determines that the Award, subaward amount, or other applicable source(s) of payment no longer exists or are insufficient with respect to the services performed by Subrecipient, the Division may terminate this Agreement notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraphs 12–13 below. A termination under this subparagraph shall be effective immediately upon determination by the Division that the source of payment no longer exists or is insufficient with respect to the services.
 - i. In the event this Agreement is terminated under this Paragraph, the Division shall remain obligated to pay for subrecipient's services under this Agreement which are fully performed and accepted by the Division prior to such termination. All finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, surveys, drawings, maps, models, photographs, and reports prepared by the Subrecipient under this Agreement shall become the property of the Division. Any use of incomplete documents shall be at the sole risk of the Division. The Division's determination of the events stated in this Subparagraph shall be conclusive.
 - ii. The Division shall provide notice in writing to Subrecipient as soon as practicable after the Division determines that the source of payment no longer exists or is insufficient with respect to the services.
10. **Taxes.** The State is exempt from Federal Excise Taxes, and no payment will be made for any taxes levied on Subrecipient's employee's wages. The Division is exempt from State and Local Sales and Use Taxes on the services. Tax Exemption Certificates will be furnished upon request. Subrecipient or an authorized contractor shall provide the Division with sworn verification regarding the filing of unemployment taxes or persons assigned by Subrecipient to perform services, which verification is incorporated herein by reference.
11. **Certification Regarding Sales and Use Tax.** By executing this Agreement, the Subrecipient certifies it is either (a) registered with the State Department of Revenue, collects, and remits State sales and use taxes as required by Georgia law, including Chapter 8 of Title 48 of the Georgia Code; or (b) not a "retailer" as defined in O.C.G.A. § 48-8-2. The Subrecipient also acknowledges and agrees that the Division may declare this Agreement void if the Division has reason to believe the

above certification is false. The Subrecipient also understands that fraudulent certification may result in the Division exercising its rights, under this Agreement or otherwise, to seek any and all remedies available to the Division in law or equity, which includes, but is not limited to, filing suit in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover damages and/or seek injunctive relief.

12. **Termination of Agreement for Cause.** If, for any reason other than a force majeure event, the Subrecipient shall fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations under this Agreement, or if the Subrecipient shall violate any of the terms, conditions, representations, covenants, agreements, or stipulations of this Agreement, the Division may terminate this Agreement upon written notice to the Subrecipient specifying the effective date of the termination which shall be no less than fifteen (15) days after notice of termination is sent to the Subrecipient.

- a. In the event of termination under this Paragraph, all finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, surveys, drawings, maps, models, photographs, and reports prepared by the Subrecipient under this Agreement shall become the property of the Division, and the Subrecipient shall be entitled to receive compensation according to this Agreement for any satisfactory work completed on such documents and other materials in which funds were accrued or encumbered up to the effective date of termination.
- b. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Agreement, in the event of a termination under this Paragraph, the Subrecipient shall not be relieved of liability to the Division for damages sustained by the Division by virtue of any breach of this Agreement by the Subrecipient, and the Division may withhold any payments to the Subrecipient for the purpose of setoff until such time as the exact amount of damages due the Division from the Subrecipient is determined.
- c. A force majeure event shall mean any act of God, such as but not limited to; war; riot; civil strife; act of terrorism, domestic or foreign; embargo; governmental rule, regulation or decree; flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or other casualty; strike, lockout, or other labor disturbance; the unavailability of labor or materials to the extent beyond the control of the party affected; pandemics, epidemics, local disease outbreaks, public health emergencies, government imposed quarantines; or any other events or circumstances not within the reasonable control of the party affected, whether similar or dissimilar to any of the foregoing.

13. **Termination of Agreement for Convenience.** The Division may terminate this Agreement at any time by giving at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Subrecipient of such termination and specifying the effective date of the termination.

- a. In the event of a termination under this Paragraph, all finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, surveys, drawings, maps, models, photographs, and reports prepared by the Subrecipient under this Agreement shall become the property of the Division, and the Subrecipient shall be entitled to receive compensation according to this Agreement for any satisfactory work completed on such documents and other materials in which funds were accrued or encumbered up to the effective date of termination.
- b. In the event of a termination under this Paragraph, the Division shall only remain obligated to pay for Subrecipient's services under this Agreement which are fully performed and accepted by the Division prior to the effective date of the termination.

14. **Closeout.** When all administrative actions and required work for the Award have been completed, when Subrecipient fails to complete the necessary administrative actions or the required work for the Award, or when this Agreement is terminated, Subrecipient agrees that it will coordinate with and comply with the Division to properly closeout the Award pursuant to 2 CFR 200.344 and 2 CFR 200.345. In doing so, Subrecipient further agrees to submit all reports (financial, performance, and other reports required by the Award or this Agreement) to the Division no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the conclusion of the Term, the effective date of any termination, or an earlier date as determined by the Division. Subrecipient agrees it will liquidate all financial obligations incurred under this Agreement no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the conclusion of Term, the effective date of any termination, or an earlier date as determined by the Division. Subrecipient agrees it will promptly refund any unobligated funds that USEPA or the Division paid and that are not authorized to be retained. *See* Office of Management and Budget Circular A-129 and Section 2 CFR 200.346. Subrecipient must account for any property acquired with Federal funds or received from the Federal Government in accordance with 2 CFR 200.310 through 200.316, and 2 CFR 200.330. The provisions of this Paragraph shall survive any termination of this Agreement.
15. **Release of Materials Pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act.** All products, reports, information, data, etc., given to, derived from, prepared by, or assembled by the Subrecipient (the “Materials”) in the performance of this Agreement shall be subject to disclosure as governed by the Georgia Open Records Act or other applicable Federal or State law. Unless otherwise required by law, the Subrecipient shall not release or deliver any Materials to the general public or to local officials pursuant to a written or oral request under the Georgia Open Records Act or otherwise, prior to consulting with the Division to determine whether the Materials are protected or otherwise not required to be released. The Division expressly acknowledges and agrees that Subrecipient is an “agency” as defined in O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 and is consequently subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. Subrecipient shall inform the Division in writing immediately if it receives any requests for Materials.
16. **Copyrights.** No reports, maps, or other documents produced or derived in whole or in part under this Agreement shall be the subject of an application for copyright by or on behalf of the Subrecipient. Any such reports, maps and other documents shall constitute a “work made for hire” pursuant to the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, and Subrecipient agrees that the Division is the original and sole owner of all rights, including without limitation copyright, in and to such reports, maps and other documents. If for any reason such reports, maps, and other documents are found not to be “works made for hire,” then Subrecipient hereby assigns to the Division all right, title and interest in and to such reports, maps and other documents without further consideration of any kind. Subrecipient agrees to execute all further documents and to take all further steps deemed advisable by the Division to secure and protect the Division’s rights as stated herein.
17. **Documents.** Provided that Subrecipient has been compensated for its services in accordance with this Agreement, the Division shall have the right to use the documents, maps, photographs, drawings and other materials (including but not limited to models, software or other digital work products) resulting from Subrecipient’s efforts under this Agreement. Subrecipient acknowledges that, in accordance with the Agreement, the Division is the original and sole owner of all rights in and to such documents, maps, photographs, drawings and other such materials including but not limited to

models, software or other digital work product. The parties agree that the Division may reuse such materials at its discretion, and, unless the Subrecipient has a continuing obligation under this Agreement or other obligations related to the materials as agreed to in writing by the parties, the Division acknowledges that said reuse is at the Division's own risk. Subrecipient shall have the right to retain copies of all such materials.

18. **Intellectual Property.** The Subrecipient agrees it will not use the name or any intellectual property, including but not limited to, the Division's trademarks or logos in any manner, including commercial advertising or as a business reference, without the express prior written consent of the Division.
19. **Personnel.** The Subrecipient represents that it has, or will secure, all personnel required in performing Subrecipient's obligations under this Agreement. Such personnel shall not be employees of or have any contractual relationship with the Division.
 - a. All the services required to complete the scope of work hereunder will be performed by the Subrecipient or under its supervision as may be allowed by law, and all the personnel engaged in the work shall be fully qualified and shall be authorized under Federal, State and local law to perform such services.
 - b. None of the work or services covered by this Agreement shall be contracted or subcontracted without complying with applicable law, including, but not limited to, Federal and State laws governing Federal assistance, and the prior written approval of the Division contact specified in Paragraph 37.
 - c. The Division, or its authorized employees, agents, and representatives, shall have the right to enter into the premises of Subrecipient and all of its contractors and subcontractors, or any places where obligations under this Agreement are being performed, to inspect, monitor, or otherwise evaluate the performance under this Agreement.
20. **Drug Free Workplace.** Subrecipient agrees that it will comply with all provisions of 2 CFR Sections 1536.10, 1536.20, and 1536.30 related to the USEPA's requirements for a drug-free workplace. Subrecipient certifies that, in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-24-1, *et seq.*, a drug-free workplace will be provided to Subrecipient's employees during the performance of this Agreement; and it will secure from any contractor or subcontractor hired to work in a drug-free workplace the following written certification: "As part of any subcontracting agreement, (subcontractor's Name), certifies to Subrecipient that a drug-free workplace will be provided for the subcontractors' employees during the performance of this Contract by complying with the provisions of paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), and (6) of subsection (b) of Code Section 50-24-3 and by notifying the contractor of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace involving the subcontractor or its employees within five days of receiving notice of the conviction."
21. **Right to Audit and Access to Records.** The Subrecipient shall maintain books, records and documents in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and procedures and which sufficiently and properly document and calculate all charges billed to the Division throughout the Term of the Agreement for a period of at least five (5) years following the date of final payment or completion of any required audit, whichever is later. Records to be maintained include, but are not

limited to, all records and financial statements pertinent to the Project and the Award. The Subrecipient further agrees that it shall make such records available to the Auditor of the State of Georgia or any authorized representative of the State, the Comptroller General of the United States, USEPA, Office of the Inspector General the Government Accountability Office, other entities as provided in 2 CFR 200.337, or any other authorized representative of the United States government, to access and examine, audit, excerpt and transcribe any pertinent books, documents, papers, electronic or optically stored and created records or other records of the Subrecipient relating to orders, invoices or payments or any other documentation or materials pertaining to this Agreement and the Project, wherever such records may be located, during normal business hours. The Subrecipient shall not impose a charge for audit or examination of the Subrecipient's books, records, and documents. If an audit reveals incorrect billings or improprieties, or any violations of generally accepted accounting principles or Federal, State or local law, the Division reserves the right to charge and recover from the Subrecipient any of the Division's costs related to the audit. Evidence of criminal conduct will be turned over to the proper authorities.

22. **Single or Program-Specific Audit.** As may be required by applicable law and in addition to, and in no way in limitation of the provisions of Paragraph 21 above, Subrecipient acknowledges that it may be subject to the audit requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F, and it agrees to cooperate with the Division and comply with all such audit requirements. A non-Federal entity (which may include subrecipients under Federal awards) that expends \$1,000,000 or more during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year in Federal awards must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F. *See* 2 CFR 200.501.
23. **Project Monitoring.** Subrecipient agrees that it will cooperate and comply with the Division in carrying out the Division's requirements to monitor the activities of and overall performance of Subrecipient under applicable Federal, State and local law, which may include, but is not limited to, providing Subrecipient with training and technical assistance on program-related matters, performing site visits to review the Subrecipient's program operations, and arranging for agreed-upon-procedures engagements as described in 2 CFR 200.425.
24. **Corrective Action.** For all significant developments that may negatively affect the subaward covered herein, including, but not limited to, single audit findings related to the subaward, other audit findings, site visits, and written notifications from Subrecipient of adverse conditions which will impact its ability to meet the scope of work, milestones or objectives, or their obligations under this Agreement, the Subrecipient agrees to cooperate and comply with the Division and to take corrective action regarding said developments. When significant developments negatively impact the subaward, Subrecipient must provide the Division with information on its plan for corrective action and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
25. **Representations and Warranties.** The Subrecipient represents and warrants that all services performed hereunder will be performed in a workmanlike manner, consistent with that level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by other providers of similar services and with sound principles commonly used by similar professionals under similar circumstances at the time the services are provided and further represents and warrants that the work will be performed as intended and described in the Appendix A.

- a. Subrecipient further represents and warrants that it has not employed or retained any entity or person, other than a bona fide employee working solely for it, to solicit or secure this Agreement and that it has not paid or agreed to pay any person, entity, business association, or firm, other than a bona fide employee working solely for it, any fee, commission, percentage, gift, or other consideration contingent upon or resulting from the award or the making of this Agreement.
26. **Use of Third-Party Data.** To the extent the Division requests that the Subrecipient obtain certain facts, information, data, assumptions, opinions and representations from third parties as part of its services (collectively, “Items”), the parties understand and agree that (i) Subrecipient’s service may be based in part or in whole on Items that have not been independently verified by the Subrecipient; (ii) so long as the Items are derived from a reasonably reliable source, Subrecipient has no obligation or duty to verify the accuracy or completeness of the Items; and (iii) the Subrecipient makes no representation(s) or warranty(ies), express or implied, with respect to the Items except that the Items were derived from a reasonably reliable source and that the Subrecipient’s services which are wholly or in part based on the Items were performed in accordance with the other provisions of this Agreement.
27. **Federal Requirements.** Subrecipient agrees to comply with all Federal requirements governing Federal assistance, Federal awards and subawards including, but not limited to all requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions of 33 U.S.C. Section 1329; Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations; Title 2, Subtitle B, Chapter XV of the Code of Federal Regulations; Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations; and other applicable rules and regulations of the USEPA governing Federal awards from USEPA under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Subrecipient acknowledges that it is familiar with said requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions and agrees to comply fully therewith to the extent required by law and by this Agreement. Allowable costs will be determined in accordance with the cost principles in the here-referenced Code of Federal Regulations. The terms of this Paragraph are in addition to, and in no way in limitation of, other Federal, State or local laws, requirements, provisions, terms or conditions that may apply to Federal awards under Section 319 of the CWA. In no way in limitation of the foregoing, Subrecipient further agrees as follows:
- a. The Subrecipient shall comply with all USEPA Grant Terms and Conditions, including, but not limited to, EPA General Terms and Conditions which may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions#program>.
 - b. The Subrecipient shall comply with all requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions of USEPA Grants Policy Issuance (GPI) 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients, as amended, including, but not limited to, EPA Subaward Policy, EPA Subaward Policy Appendix A: Distinctions Between Subrecipients and Contractors, EPA Subaward Policy Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards, and EPA Subaward Policy Appendix C: Model Programmatic Subaward Reporting Requirement, which may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>.
 - c. The Subrecipient shall comply with all requirements under Clean Water Act Section 319 Non-Point Source Assistance Agreements Public Awareness Terms and Conditions Effective October 1, 2024, which may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/clean-water->

[act-section-319-non-point-source-assistance-agreements-public-awareness-terms.](#)

- d. Subrecipient shall comply with all applicable statutory, regulatory, and Executive Order requirements that may apply to subrecipients on USEPA funded projects per 2 CFR 200.332 including those listed in Information on Requirements that Pass-Through Entities Must “Flow Down” to Subrecipients, as amended, found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-subaward-cross-cutter-requirements>. Subrecipient further acknowledges that the Flow Down requirements referenced above are not intended to be comprehensive and there may be other applicable statutory, regulatory, or Executive Order requirements. Said Flow Down requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:
- i. Non-Discrimination Laws. Subrecipient agrees it will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, natural origin, sex, disability, or age pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and USEPA’s rules and regulations on Nondiscrimination in Programs Receiving Federal Assistance from the Environmental Protection Agency, in 40 CFR Part 5 and 40 CFR Part 7.
 - ii. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. Subrecipient agrees to comply with regulations at 40 CFR Part 33, Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Programs, to ensure nondiscrimination in the award of contracts under USEPA financial assistance agreements. These requirements include, among other requirements, that a recipient must make good faith efforts to contract with disadvantaged business enterprises whenever procuring construction, equipment, services, and supplies under a USEPA financial assistance agreement.
 - iii. Consultation with State and Local Officials. Subrecipient agrees to comply with the Division to ensure that all requirements of Executive Order 12372 and 40 CFR Part 29 regarding consultation with State and local officials are met to ensure smoother coordination of the Federal assistance program and to ensure that projects funded thereunder are consistent with local planning requirements.
 - iv. Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. Pursuant to Section 306 of the Clean Air Act and Section 508 of the Clean Water Act, Subrecipient agrees to take all necessary steps to ensure that any facilities used to perform under this Agreement are not disqualified due to certain violations of the CAA or CWA, including, but not limited to, checking the System for Award Management (SAM) <https://sam.gov/>, to determine if facilities that will be used to perform contracts or subawards are listed therein. Should any such facilities be disqualified, Subrecipient agrees to immediately notify the Division of the same, and further agrees that it will not use any such facility(ies) in its performance under this Agreement.
 - v. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Subrecipient agrees to comply with all applicable Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act reporting requirements.
 - vi. Suspension, Debarment, and Other Responsibility Matters. Subrecipient agrees to take all necessary steps, including checking SAM, to ensure that no potential contractor, subrecipient, or their principals and agents are suspended, debarred, or otherwise ineligible to participate in any Federal assistance programs. Subrecipient

further certifies that it, and its principals and agents:

1. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency, or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal funds.
2. Have not, within a three-year period preceding this Agreement, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or state antitrust statutes; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.
3. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity with commission of any of the above offenses.
4. Have not within a three-year period preceding this Agreement had one or more public transactions terminated for cause or default.

Where the Subrecipient is unable to certify any of the statements in this certification, the Subrecipient shall provide the Division with a written explanation which shall be attached to this Agreement.

- vii. Limits on Fees by Individual Consultants. Subrecipient agrees to comply with the limitations on compensation for individual consultants under 2 CFR 1500.10. Additional information regarding when the consultant fee limit applies is available in the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.
- viii. Management Fees. Subrecipient agrees it will not charge management fees or make any similar arrangements to receive USEPA financial assistance in excess of direct or Federally approved indirect cost rates.
- ix. Restrictions on Lobbying. Subrecipient acknowledges it is familiar with, it is subject to, and agrees to comply with the requirements in 40 CFR Part 34 regarding restrictions on lobbying, including, but not limited to, submitting certification and disclosure forms that may be required by 40 CFR 34.110 or that are otherwise required by law. In accordance with this subsection, Subrecipient certifies that:
 1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid in full or will be paid, by or on behalf of Subrecipient, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
 2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Agreement, then Subrecipient shall fully disclose same to the Division, and shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

- x. Uniform Grant Guidance Requirements. Subrecipient agrees to comply with all applicable requirements of 2 CFR Part 200 and other grant requirements referenced herein including, but not limited to, when Subrecipient awards procurement contracts, makes subawards, and incurs other costs borne by USEPA financial assistance.
- xi. Build America, Buy America Act. Subrecipient agrees, to the extent applicable, to comply with the Buy America sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58, Sections 70911–70917). This includes, but is not limited to, the Subrecipient implementing the requirements in their procurements, and these requirements must be included in the terms of all subawards and any contracts at any tier. BABA states in part that “none of the funds made available for a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure...may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States.” See P.L. 117-58, Section 70914(a). These requirements apply to an entire infrastructure project, even if it is funded by both Federal and non-Federal funds. Subrecipient agrees to consult the USEPA’s BABA website <https://www.epa.gov/baba>; 2 CFR Part 184; and the Office of Management and Budget, Made In America Office’s BABA website, for more information including descriptions of general applicability waivers, legal definitions, and sourcing requirements.
- xii. National Environmental Policy Act. Where appropriate, as determined by the USEPA, Subrecipient agrees to assist USEPA and the Division with compliance under 40 CFR Part 6 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- xiii. National Historic Preservation Act. Subrecipient agrees to make itself available and to cooperate with USEPA and the Division on any required consultation processes with USEPA, the State, or Tribal Historic Preservation Office, prior to commencing the Project or services hereunder, to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
- xiv. Archeological and Historic Preservation Act. If archeologically significant artifacts or similar items are discovered after a USEPA funded construction project has begun, and compliance may be coordinated with NHPA, Subrecipient agrees to immediately inform the Division of such discovery and will cooperate and comply with the Division, USEPA, and any other applicable Federal agency in compliance with the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act. Subrecipient further agrees that if it discovers potentially archeologically significant artifacts or similar items it shall not transfer, sell, demolish, substantially alter, or allow said items to significantly deteriorate.
- xv. Protection of Wetlands. Subrecipient agrees to cooperate and assist USEPA and the Division in determining whether a proposed project or services performed will be located in (or affect) a wetland, and, if so, Subrecipient agrees to assist and comply with evaluating practicable alternative locations for the project or other mitigation pursuant to Executive Order 11990 (1973), as amended.
- xvi. Flood Plain Management. For any project or services that are in or will affect a flood plain, Subrecipient agrees to comply with and work with the Division and USEPA

to evaluate practicable alternatives or other mitigation to reduce flood risks and protect flood plains, pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (1977), as amended; Executive Order 13690 (2015); and Water Resources Council guidance.

- xvii. Farmland Protection Policy Act. Subrecipient agrees to comply with and assist the Division, USEPA, and/or the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), as appropriate, to ensure compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act which requires the USEPA to identify the potential adverse effects of Federal programs on farmland and its conversion to nonagricultural uses, to mitigate these effects, and to ensure that programs are carried out in a manner that is compatible with the farmland preservation policies of state and local governments, and private organizations.
- xviii. Coastal Zone Management Act. Subrecipient agrees to consult with and comply with the Division and the State Coastal Zone Management agency during the planning stages of the project to ensure that the project will be consistent with the State coastal zone management plan, pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act.
- xix. Coastal Barrier Resources Act. Subrecipient agrees to consult with and comply with the Division and the State Coastal Zone Management agency during the planning phases of a proposed project located in the Coastal Barriers Resources System (as defined in the Coastal Barrier Resources Act) to determine whether a proposed project will have an effect on the system, and, if so, the alternative sites or mitigating measures that must be incorporated in the project's design.
- xx. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Subrecipient agrees to consult with and comply with the Division and other appropriate State or Federal (National Park Service or Bureau of Land Management) agency(ies) to determine whether the project or any alternatives under consideration may affect a designated river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- xxi. Endangered Species Act. If any action involved in the project may affect a protected species or critical habitat as defined by the Endangered Species Act, Subrecipient agrees to notify and coordinate with the Division and USEPA in consultation with appropriate Federal wildlife agencies (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service) to ensure that activities are not likely to jeopardize endangered species, adversely modify designated critical habitats, or incidentally take (injure or kill) endangered animals without authorization with the appropriate federal wildlife agency as described in 50 CFR Part 402.
- xxii. Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. Subrecipient agrees to coordinate with the Division and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to determine whether a proposed project may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitats (EFH) under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. If an action may adversely affect an EFH, the Subrecipient agrees to comply with and complete an EFH consultation with NMFS.
- xxiii. Safe Drinking Water Act. Subrecipient agrees that none of its activities completed pursuant to this Agreement will contaminate any sole source aquifer (as defined in the Safe Drinking Water Act). Subrecipient further agrees, prior to beginning activities related to the Project, to contact and consult with the Division and other appropriate State officials to determine whether a sole source aquifer is in the vicinity

of the proposed project. If a sole source aquifer is in the project planning area, Subrecipient agrees to consult with State ground water officials to conduct investigations determining if the aquifer could be contaminated by the Project, and, if so, Subrecipient must consult with the Division and State ground water officials and elect an alternative site or devise adequate mitigation measures.

- xxiv. Davis-Bacon and Related Act. Subrecipient agrees to comply with all Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 513 requirements with respect to the Davis-Bacon and Related Act (Davis Bacon). CWA Section 513 applies the Davis Bacon requirements to “treatment works” projects that receive grants under the CWA. CWA Section 212 defines construction and treatment works for grants under Title II and the Section 212 definition can be used as a guide for determining whether a project is a treatment works for purposes of CWA Section 319(h) grants. If the project meets the definition and if the contract expense is greater than \$2,000, Davis Bacon would apply. The Department of Labor has resources and a hotline to understand how to comply with Davis Bacon, including its updated Davis Bacon regulations, effective October 23, 2023.
 - e. Award-Specific Requirements. Subrecipient agrees that it shall comply with any and all requirements that may be imposed by USEPA in its agreement(s) with the State of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and/or the Division related to the Award. Said requirements include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Operation and Maintenance. Subrecipient agrees it will assure the continued proper operation and maintenance of all nonpoint source management practices that have been implemented for projects funded under this Agreement. Such practices shall be operated and maintained for the expected lifespan of the specific practice and in accordance with commonly accepted standards. The Subrecipient shall include a provision in every applicable sub-agreement or contract awarded under this Agreement that requires that the management practices for the project be properly operated and maintained.
28. **State Requirements**. In addition to, and in no way in limitation of, other Federal, State, or local laws, regulations or requirements, or other requirements mentioned elsewhere in this Agreement, Subrecipient agrees as follows:
- a. State Processes Under the Clean Water Act. Subrecipient shall cooperate and comply with all State processes, procedures, and requirements for conducting assessments and ensuring compliance with Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 401 and 404, where applicable.
 - b. State Processes Under APRPA and NHPA. Subrecipient shall cooperate and comply with all State processes, procedures, and requirements for conducting assessments and other compliance activities under the Archaeological and Paleontological Resources Protection Act and the National Historical Preservation Act and/or Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
 - c. Compliance with the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act. Subrecipient certifies and agrees that it will comply with O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91 relating to the verification of the status of newly hired employees under the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act.
 - d. Boycott of Israel. The Subrecipient certifies and agrees that the Subrecipient is not currently

engaged in, and agrees for the duration of this Agreement not to engage in, a boycott of Israel, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 50-5-85.

- e. Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan. Unless otherwise required by Federal, State or local law, this Agreement, or the Division, Subrecipient agrees to follow Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan, as amended, including all laws and regulations authorizing, implementing, and regulating the same.
- f. E-Verify. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91, Subrecipient agrees that it will provide an E-Verify affidavit if necessary.

- 29. **Applicable Law**. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Georgia law, without regard to its conflict of laws rules or any other rules directing referral to foreign law or forums. Any action brought to assert any right or remedy pertaining to this Agreement shall be brought exclusively in the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia. Each party expressly submits and consents in advance to such jurisdiction and waives any objection based upon lack of personal jurisdiction, improper venue or forum non-conveniens.
- 30. **No Waiver**. The failure of the Division at any time to require performance by the Subrecipient of any provision herein, shall in no way affect the right of the Division thereafter to enforce that same provision or any part of the Agreement, nor shall the failure of the Division to enforce any breach of any provision herein be taken or held to be a waiver of such provision, or as a waiver, modification or rescission of the Agreement itself.
- 31. **Indirect Damages**. Except as otherwise provided herein, Subrecipient hereby waives its rights to recover any consequential, indirect, or incidental damages (including but not limited to, loss of use, income, profits, financing, or reputation), arising out of, or relating to, this Agreement in the performance of the services or both.
- 32. **Assignability**. Subrecipient shall not transfer or assign any of its rights, title or interest in this Agreement nor may it delegate any of its duties or obligations hereunder without the prior written consent of the Division. The Division may transfer or assign all or any of its duties, obligations, rights, title or interest in this agreement to another agency or authority of the State of Georgia or otherwise as may be allowed by law, without notice to Subrecipient.
- 33. **No Conflicts**. The Subrecipient represents and covenants that it presently has no interest and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect, which would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance required under the Agreement. It is specifically acknowledged and agreed that for the purposes of this Agreement, the Subrecipient shall be an independent contractor and nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as creating a joint venture, partnership or employment relationship between the parties.
- 34. **Counterparts; Electronic Signature**. This Agreement may be executed in two (2) counterparts each of which is deemed an original of equal dignity with the other and which is deemed one and the same instrument as the other. The Division and Subrecipient agree that any electronic signatures on this Agreement hereto constitute original, valid signatures pursuant to the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, O.C.G.A. § 10-1-21 *et seq.*

35. **Entire Agreement; Modification.** This Agreement represents the sole and complete understanding of the terms of the Agreement between the parties hereto with respect to the subject matter contained herein and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings, oral or written, with respect thereto. No modification or amendment to this Agreement will be binding on either party hereto unless such modification or amendment is reduced to a writing executed by both parties. Any changes in the scope and/or Term of this Agreement shall be mutually agreed upon by and between the Division and the Subrecipient in a writing executed in accordance with this Paragraph.
36. **Severability.** If any one or more of the provisions of this Agreement are for any reason be held by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability will not affect any other provision, and this Agreement will be construed as if such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision had never been contained herein.
37. **Notice.** All notices, correspondence requests, demands, waivers and other communications required or permitted to be given under this Agreement shall be made in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given if delivered by U.S. Mail, postage paid, sent by nationally recognized overnight courier, or by electronic mail to the contacts as follows:

If to the Division:

MARY E GAZAWAY
GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR
GEORGIA EPD WATERSHED PROTECTION BRANCH
NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM GRANTS UNIT
2 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DRIVE
SUITE 1470A, EAST TOWER
ATLANTA, GA 30334
470-524-0556 (ZOOM PHONE)
mary.gazaway@dnr.ga.gov

If to the Subrecipient:

JILLIAN THOMPSON
AP SPECIALIST
HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FINANCE DEPARTMENT
130 JACOB'S WAY
CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523
706-839-0211
jthompson@habershamga.com

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Division and the Subrecipient have executed this Agreement on the day and year below written.

**The Environmental Protection Division of
the Department of Natural Resources,
State of Georgia**

**Habersham County Board of
Commissioners**

Jeffrey W. Cown
Director

Bruce Harkness
Chairman

Date:

Date:

APPENDIX A SCOPE OF WORK

ELEMENT 08 FY2025 SECTION 319(h) GRANT

Title: Implement 2026 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan – Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project

Lead Organization: Habersham County Board of Commissioners
130 Jacob's Way
Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-839-0200

Primary Contact: Jillian Thompson, AP Specialist
Habersham County Board of Commissioners
Finance Department
706-839-0211
jthompson@habershamga.com

Katherine DeVane, Staff Accountant
Habersham County Board of Commissioners
Finance Department
706-839-0223
kdevane@habershamga.com

Secondary Contact: Brad Coppedge
Soque River Watershed Association
Cell: 678-662-4131
brad@soque.org

Project Start Date: October 1, 2026
Project End Date: September 30, 2029

Federal Project Funds:	\$499,952.00
Local Match:	\$333,302.00
Total Budget:	\$833,254.00

Regional Water Council: Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council

Plans to be Implemented:

- [*Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan \(2019\)*](#): Urban- Stormwater, Agriculture, Education & Outreach, Water Quality Monitoring

- Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan at <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/coosa-north-georgia-regional-water-plan>
- 2026 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan (Attachment 2) and Addendum A (Attachment 7)

Project Goals and Background

The Soque River watershed comprises 160 square miles or 57% of the land area wholly within the boundaries of Habersham County and is the northeastern most tributary to the Upper Chattahoochee River (8-digit HUC 03130001). The river serves as the drinking water source for the City of Clarkesville while Hazel Creek and Camp Creek, tributaries to the Soque River, supply water for the City of Cornelia. Other localities in Habersham County, the cities of Demorest and Baldwin, obtain drinking water from the Chattahoochee River below the confluence with the Soque. Municipal water supplies for Mount Airy and Alto come from groundwater wells within the watershed. The river also supports the two biggest sources of revenue to the local economy - agriculture and tourism. The Soque is also nationally renowned as a trophy trout stream, a status that requires high quality, clean water.

Elevated population growth and residential/business development are producing major threats to streams in the Soque River watershed and result in lower water quality caused by Bacteria and Sediment impairments. An 11.7-mile segment of the Soque River (Goshen Creek to Georgia Hwy 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek) is Not Supporting a designated use of Fishing on Georgia's 2024 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters due to degraded fish populations caused by excessive Sediment. The applicable Georgia water quality criteria applied to Sediment pollution states: *All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.*

A GAEPD *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Evaluation for Twenty-Nine Stream Segments in the Chattahoochee River Basin for Sediment* (December 2017) showed Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) Scores of 26 and 32/IBI Category of Poor; Index of Well-Being (IWB) Scores of 7.9 and 8.03/IWB Category of Fair, and Habitat Scores of 92.5 and 105.3 from two Georgia Wildlife Resources Division sampling records (2004 and 2010, respectively) at site 764 on the impaired segment. Monitoring history identifies the nonpoint sources of Sediment pollution that impact the impaired segment during high stormwater runoff periods to be land disturbing activities, streambank erosion, dirt roads, and removal of vital riparian buffers/ground cover.

The Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) stream sampling team under the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and SRWA Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) Program collected Sediment data as suspended sediment concentration (SSC) at baseflow and stormflow on the mainstem of the Soque River in 2007-2008. Sediment loads generally increased from north (more forested) to south (more disturbed) in the watershed. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and SRWA Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) Program, the Engineering Management, Inc., (EMI) Team, and some local municipalities will continue to monitor three pollutant indicators (*E. coli*, turbidity and TSS) under a GAEPD approved Sampling Quality and Assurance Plan (SQAP) (Attachment 4). Corrective actions will focus on areas of the impaired segment where sediment inputs were identified.

The overarching goal of recommendations in the 2026 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan (SRWPP) is to meet state water quality standards in the Soque River and its tributaries which fully

Support designated uses (fishing, recreation, and drinking water). According to the SRWPP, priority streambank restoration and stabilization project sites will be those where active erosion coincides with inadequate riparian buffers and documented biological or sediment impairments, allowing restoration efforts to achieve both water quality and habitat benefits. The Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project was identified as a high mitigation priority (Attachment 7) and will include the following:

Stabilize the channel & banks (Attachment 1)

- Reduce active erosion, bank slumping, and excessive sediment input.
- Re-grade, bioengineering (willow stakes, coir), toe wood, rock, or floodplain reconnection.

Restore natural hydrology & flow behavior

- Improve baseflow support, reduce peak flows, and increase infiltration/storage where possible.

Reconnect the river to the floodplain

- Increase floodplain inundation frequency to dissipate energy, deposit sediment on the floodplain, and reduce downstream flooding/erosion.
- Techniques include lowering banks, adding floodplain benches, removing levees, or re-meandering in valley bottoms.

Improve aquatic habitat quality & diversity

- Increase habitat complexity (pools/riffles, large woody material, undercut banks) and improve cover/refuge

Enhance water quality (impairment reversal efforts)

- Reduce nutrients, fine sediment, bacteria, and thermal pollution
- Often paired with riparian buffers and upstream source controls

Restore riparian & instream vegetation

- Rebuild native riparian corridors for shade, bank strength, nutrient uptake, and habitat.
- Control invasive and establish a sustainable plant community

Support geomorphic function (let the river "work" naturally again)

- Re-establish sediment transport balance (neither aggrading nor degrading excessively).
- Target appropriate channel dimensions, slope, and bed material for the watershed and valley setting

Project Activities and Tasks

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Final procurement provisions with Engineering Management, Inc. (EMI) and Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES)

TASK #1: Establish comprehensive contracts capturing all itemized services based on historical company projects and required scientific, technological, and professional expertise.

OUTPUTS: Signed & dated documentation of contracted services. EMI: Sample collection & testing of *E. coli*, Turbidity & TSS (12 total quarters); RES: Permit Writing; Permit Payment; Design, QC & As-Built Services; Construction Material, Equipment & Labor; Construction Planting Material; Construction Site Erosion Fixes.

OUTCOMES: EMI: A mitigation project water quality sampling & testing program; RES: A

scale-based engineering design and construction project that addresses all property mitigation needs to stabilize streambanks; improve aquatic habitat; reduce water quality impairment; restore riparian buffer.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Implementation of 60%/40% Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project to address sedimentation pollution from nonpoint sources in the impaired segment watershed.

TASK #2: Design, permit, and install streambank restoration and stabilization BMPs according to construction plans with attention to the 2015 Georgia Stormwater Management Manual on 775 linear feet of the Soque River to demonstrate nonpoint source pollution controls.

OUTPUTS: Engineering Designs; Permits; Maps; Pictures of pre- and post-BMP installation; Records of BMP inspections and maintenance records.

OUTCOMES: Signed and dated Certificates of Completion/Payment; Stakeholder project review/sign-off after a completed county public meeting to share project results and successes.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Initial erosion control measures per 2016 Edition - Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia (Green Book).

TASK #3: Install, inspect, and maintain erosion control BMPs at the project site according to construction plans and 2016 Edition Green Book.

OUTPUTS: As appropriate: silt fences; construction exits; temporary sediment ponds; temporary vegetation; pre & post installation photographs; inspection & sediment monitoring reports; maintenance records; and additional measures during construction.

OUTCOMES: Sediment contained on site by 100% properly installed required BMPs and monitoring results within required numeric parameters for the duration of the project.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Operations and Maintenance of structural BMPs such as streambank restoration and stabilization.

TASK #4: Operate and maintain structural BMPs for the expected lifespan of the practice and according to commonly accepted standards for proper functioning of the system as designed.

OUTPUTS: Documentation of provisions (O&M Manual, Inspection Schedule, SOP) for operations and maintenance; signs and trash bins to keep trash from accumulating at the site after the cleanup; records of inspections and maintenance kept and made available for review upon request for the duration of the project.

OUTCOMES: Properly functioning BMPs with records of inspections and maintenance made available for review after the expiration of this grant agreement.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Work with Habersham County officials, local municipal representatives, and general stakeholder partners to organize and conduct a minimum of three (3) review sessions/events (meetings, field trips, clean-ups).

TASK #5: Conduct time designated review sessions/events that provide updates to the management, installation, and maintenance of the Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project to restore an impaired segment of the Soque River.

OUTPUTS: Announcements; Press Releases; Agendas; Sign-in Sheets/Attendance Records; Pre-and post-BMP installation handout and presentation materials; Surveys/Questionnaires.

OUTCOMES: Project partners receive updates on mitigation progress and provide feedback on personal understanding of stormwater runoff and impact of erosion on local water resources.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: New *E. coli*, Turbidity and TSS sampling and testing program for project monitoring sites outlined in a Sampling Quality and Assurance Plan approved by GAEPD to enhance data integrity and collection efforts that target pre-set nonpoint source pollution reduction goals.

TASK #6: Share historical and ongoing water quality monitoring data from SRWA/Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) and EMI programs with project partners and stakeholders.

OUTPUTS: Announcements; sign-in sheets of attendance; Chattahoochee River Keeper (CRK) and EMI water quality monitoring data and reports; Neighborhood Water Watch handouts.

OUTCOMES: CRK and EMI share monitoring data at a minimum of two community engagements with project partners and stakeholders during the project period.

TASK #7: Execute a pre- and post-BMP water quality monitoring data tracking program based on monthly schedule outlined in the approved Sampling Quality and Assurance Plan.

OUTPUTS: Records of raw data collected upstream and downstream of the Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project sites; Analysis/Summary of water quality monitoring data.

OUTCOMES: Ongoing data analyses or summaries that track trends in sediment loadings related to achieving predetermined reduction goals.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Estimated pollutant load reductions using Pollutant Load Estimation Tool (PLET) or other acceptable models for sediment and nutrients based on installed BMPs.

TASK #8: Model reductions in sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus loads to report to USEPA Grants Reporting & Tracking System.

OUTPUTS: Load reduction numbers for total sediment, phosphorus & nitrogen on installed streambank restoration & stabilization BMPs.

OUTCOMES: Model outputs show sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen load reductions.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Identification of Project and Outputs on a conspicuous sign, document cover, title page, or map legend block.

TASK #9: Install a conspicuous sign at the project site to inform the public that the project is funded by USEPA.

OUTPUTS: Durable outdoor signage at the project site containing the USEPA logo and the following text: “This cooperative project has been funded in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.”

OUTCOMES: Project site and all products include signage or notations with the required logo and text.

PROJECT ACTIVITY: Project Reporting and Evaluation

TASK #10: Prepare and submit quarterly status reports and invoices by the 15th of January, April, July, and October throughout the project term using templates provided by GAEPD.

OUTPUTS: Status reports and invoices; Water quality data & analysis of NWW monitoring of Soque River; Visual inspections & other records that track BMP installation progress; Supporting documentation of expenditures; Evaluations and maintenance records of any Tasks/components completed within the term of the grant.

OUTCOMES: Quarterly Reports submitted on time showing percentages of progress and expenditures incurred to include in the USEPA Grants Reporting and Tracking System.

TASK #11: Participate in project review meetings with GAEPD six months after the project start date and then every twelve months (annually) for the duration of the project.

OUTPUTS: Attendance at meetings; verbal or written responses to GAEPD.

OUTCOMES: Full participation at 100% of all project review meetings.

TASK #12: Submit Closeout Report and Final Invoice using templates provided by GAEPD.

OUTPUTS: Closeout Report and Final Invoice documenting evaluation, completion, and costs of project activities compared to Project Schedule and Budget.

OUTCOMES: Closeout Report and Final Invoice within 45 days of contract term to include in the USEPA Grants Reporting and Tracking System.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participating Organizations

Lead Organization Name: Roles + Responsibilities

Habersham County Board of Commissioners

Serve as Lead Organization; Report memoranda of agreement and interagency contracts with other parties; Administer grant funds; Support public information efforts; Assist with site identifications and landowner contacts;

Contribute \$88,272.00 of County Finance Department staff hours to in-kind Non-federal Match

Partner Organization(s): Roles + Responsibilities

Soque River Watershed Association

Develop educational and informational materials; Facilitate review sessions/events; Supervise and work with BMP Project Manager in completion of BMP project tasks.

Contribute \$154,702 to cash Non-federal Match

Contribute \$6,628 SRWA Operation Staff in-kind Non-Federal Match

Contribute \$8,700 Travel mileage Non-Federal Match

Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation: mitigation property owner

<https://blackhawkflyfishing.com/>

Contribute \$75,000 cash Non-federal Match

City of Clarkesville

Support public information efforts; Assist with site identifications and landowner contacts;

Habersham County Chamber of Commerce

Support public information efforts; Provide contacts and assistance with businesses and landowners.

Ethicon (Johnson & Johnson)-Cornelia, GA

Labor support provided by the company's employee community project volunteer work team

Duncan Hughes-Volunteer assistance to the SRWA project management team

Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES)

Headquarters-Houston, TX/Satellite Office-Athens, GA

Contracted to provide professional, environmental, and scientific knowledge for implementation of Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project

Engineering Management, Inc. (EMI)

Colby Jones, Water Resources Coordinator

303 Swanson Drive, Lawrenceville, GA, 30043

cell: 470-216-2650, email: cjones@eminc.biz

Contracted to provide professional services in Mitigation Project Water Quality Sampling & Testing Program: Collect samples & test *E. coli*, Turbidity & TSS (12 total quarters)

Project Location

Street Address or Closest Intersection: 9400 GA-Highway 197N-Clarkesville, GA

City or Cities: Clarkesville

County or Counties: Habersham County

Latitude (decimal degrees): 34.7831° N

Longitude (decimal degrees): -83.5654° W

Project Area Description

Located within a rural/suburban parcel of approximately 114.35 acres in Habersham County north of downtown Clarkesville in the Batesville area, near the intersection with Mountain View Lane. Blackhawk Fly-Fishing provides private fishing along approximately two miles of the spring creek fed waters of the Soque River as it runs through Batesville, Georgia from the Blue Ridge Mountains with strong rapids, deep pools and slow flowing lanes over sand and rock bottom.

Project Area Map: Attachment 3 (proposed project BMP & monitoring locations)

Watershed Information

HUC# (HUC12 or HUC10): 0313000102

Watershed Name: Soque River

Size of Watershed(s) or Drainage Area (Acres): 114.35 acres

Size of Project Area (if not entire watershed): Attachment 3

Nonpoint Source Pollution Impairments and Healthy Waters

Reach Name: Soque River (Goshen Creek to Georgia Hwy 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek)

Reach ID#: GAR031300010217

Reach River Basin: Chattahoochee

Reach Assessment: Not Supporting

Category: Category 4a (Bio F)

Reach Source of Impairment: NP (Nonpoint Source)

Reach Cause: Bio F - Biota Impacted (Fish Community)

TMDL Title: *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Evaluation for Twenty-Nine Stream Segments in the Chattahoochee River Basin for Sediment*

Year of TMDL: December 2017

Project Budget

Match is from nonfederal sources and does not overlap any current or future projects.

A. Personnel

A. 319(h) Grant Funds (Personnel)

\$0.00

A. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Personnel)-36 months

\$88,272.00

A. Total Personnel

\$88,272.00

A. Personnel Description and Narrative Justification (see attachment #6)

Habersham County Board of Commissioners Finance Department

B. Fringe Benefits

B. 319(h) Grant Funds (Fringe Benefits)

\$0.00

B. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Fringe Benefits)

\$0.00

B. Total Fringe Benefits

\$0.00

B. Fringe Benefits Description and Narrative Justification

N/A

C. Travel

C. 319(h) Grant Funds (Travel)

\$0.00

C. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Travel)

\$8,700.00

C. Total Travel

\$8,700.00

C. Travel Description and Narrative Justification (see attachment #5)

SRWA Mitigation Manager-Brad Coppedge

SRWA EBM-Elijah Keene

D. Equipment

D. 319(h) Grant Funds (Equipment)

\$0.00

D. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Equipment)

\$0.00

D. Total Equipment

\$0.00

D. Equipment Description and Narrative Justification

NA

E. Supplies**E. 319(h) Grant Funds (Supplies)**

\$0.00

E. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Supplies)

\$2,770.00

E. Total Supplies

\$2,770.00

E. Supplies Description and Narrative Justification (see attachment #5)

SRWA volunteers: shovels, rakes, working gloves, wheelbarrows

F. Contractual**F. 319(h) Grant Funds (Contractual)**

\$499,952.00

F. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Contractual)

\$225,000.00

F. Total Contractual

\$724,952.00

F. Contractual Description and Narrative Justification

Contractor: Resource Environmental Solutions (RES)

Description of Duties: Mitigation Project for 775 LFPermit Writing and Coordination: **\$72,488.00**FA & Permit Fees: **\$27,500.00**Design, QC & As-Built: **\$129,500.00**Construction Material: **\$74,965.00**Equipment: **\$125,120.00**Labor: **\$150,020.00**Construction Planting Material: **\$109,985.00**Construction Site Erosion Fixes: **\$35,374.00****Total Construction Cost: \$724,952.00****Cash Contributions to Non-Federal Match**Soque River Watershed Association: **\$150,000**Blackhawk Fly-Fishing (donor and mitigation property owner): **\$75,000****Total Cash Contribution to Non-Federal Match: \$225,000****G. Other****G. 319(h) Grant Funds (Other)**

\$0.00

G. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Other)

\$8,560.00

G. Total Other

\$8,560.00

G. Other Description and Narrative Justification (see attachment #5)

SRWA Mitigation Project Water Sampling & Testing (EMI): \$1,932.00 cash match

SRWA Operation Staff: \$6,628.00 in-kind match

H. Indirect**H. 319(h) Grant Funds (Indirect)**

\$0.00

H. Non-Federal Matching Funds (Indirect)

\$0.00

H. Total Indirect

\$0.00

H. Indirect Description and Narrative Justification**TOTAL 319(h) Grant Funds**

\$499,952.00

TOTAL Non-Federal Matching Funds

\$333,302.00

PROJECT TOTAL: 319(h) Grant Funds + Non-Federal Matching Funds

\$833,254.00

Project Links & Attachments**Attachment 1:** Blackhawk Fly-Fishing Operation Mitigation Project Photos**Attachment 2:** 2026 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan**Attachment 3:** Project Area Map-Mitigation BMPs & Water Testing Sites**Attachment 4:** 2026 Updated SRWA SQAP**Attachment 5:** SRWA Calculations Sheet for In-Kind Values**Attachment 6:** Habersham County Calculations Sheet for In-Kind Personnel Values**Attachment 7:** WPP Addendum A for the Blackhawk Private Property Restoration Project

Appendix B - Project Schedule																																								
	Initial	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter			4th Quarter			5th Quarter			6th Quarter			7th Quarter			8th Quarter			9th Quarter			10th Quarter			11th Quarter			12th Quarter			Final		
Federal Drawdown Amount	\$499,952	\$161			\$161			\$50,156			\$95,078			\$95,078			\$105,305			\$105,305			\$162			\$161			\$161			\$48,063			\$0					
Percent Federal Remaining	100%	100%			100%			90%			71%			52%			31%			10%			10%			10%			10%			10%			0%			0%		
Match Amount	\$0	\$500			\$500			\$12,500			\$75,000			\$213,544			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,500			\$4,600			\$2,500			\$3,658			\$333,302		
Percent Match Accrued	0%	0%			0%			4%			27%			91%			92%			94%			95%			97%			98%			99%			100%			100%		
Milestones/Tasks		Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27	Aug-27	Sep-27	Oct-27	Nov-27	Dec-27	Jan-28	Feb-28	Mar-28	Apr-28	May-28	Jun-28	Jul7 2028	Aug-28	Sep-28	Oct-28	Nov-28	Dec-28	Jan-29	Feb-29	Mar-29	Apr-29	May-29	Jun-29	Jul-29	Aug-29	Sep-29			
Execute Grant Agreement																																								
Task 1: Procure professional services (EMI & RES)																																								
Task 2: Design, Permit & Install Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Mitigation Project					Design	Design	Permit	Install																																
Task 3: Install mitigation project site erosion control measures								E&S Controls																																
Task 4: Document BMP O&M provisions (Manual, Inspection Schedule, SOP)																																								
Task 5: Conduct minimum (3) review sessions/events																																								
Task 6: Share historical/ongoing NWW & EMI water quality monitoring data																																								
Task 7: Execute monthly pre- & post-BMP monitoring																																								
Task 8: Model load reduction estimates in sediment, nitrogen & phosphorus																																								
Task 9: Install signage at project site identifying USEPA funding																																								
Task 10: Prepare and submit Quarterly Invoices & Status Reports																																								
Task 11: Participate in project review meetings with GAEPD																																								
Task 12: Submit Final Invoice and Closeout Report																																								

Key	
BMP Design/Permits/Installation	
Education & Outreach	
Monitoring	
Agreements/LRE/Signage/Reports	

Attachment 1:
Blackhawk Fly-Fishing Operation
Mitigation Project Photos

2026-27 Blackhawk Fly-Fishing
Mitigation Project BMP
Option Photos

Blackhawk Fly-Fishing Operator Riverbank Reinforcement Mitigation Project Options Involving Rip-Rap, Vegetation, and Mesh



Blackhawk Fly-Fishing Operator Hillside Water Run-off Mitigation Project Options Involving Rip-Rap, Plant Vegetation, and Mesh



Attachment 2:
2026 Soque River
Watershed Protection Plan

Soque River Watershed Protection Plan

February 2026



The preparation of this project was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Provisions of Section 319(h) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended. Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, February, 2026



*Administered by the
Non-Point Source Program
Environmental Protection Division
Georgia Department of Natural Resources*

Prepared for:
Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA)

Prepared by:
Resource Environmental Solutions (RES)

Partners:

The partners listed below participated in the 2026 update through a combination of coordination meetings, watershed field visits, and review of the draft Watershed Protection Plan (WPP). Stakeholders provided data, technical input, and written feedback on plan sections (e.g., impairments, monitoring, and BMP prioritization), and helped identify implementation opportunities and roles for the updated implementation period.

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

City of Baldwin

City of Cornelia

City of Demorest

City of Mount Airy

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Georgia Forestry Commission

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Habersham County

Habersham County Chamber of Commerce

Habersham / White County Homebuilders Association

Natural Resources Conservation Service

North Georgia Technical College

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

U.S. Forest Service

Table of Contents

Soque River Watershed Protection Plan.....	1
Section 1: Introduction.....	5
Executive Summary	5
Introduction & Context	6
Section 2: Watershed Status and Updates.....	10
Land Cover & Land Use.....	10
.....	12
Population & Growth Trends.....	13
Water Quality Status & Impairments	13
Summary: Key Status Takeaways	15
Section 3: Water Quality Assessment & Trends.....	16
3.1 Overview of 2024 EPD Integrated Report Listings	16
3.2 Historical Comparison and Trend Analysis	18
3.2.1 Subwatershed Summary of Improving Reaches/Segments	18
3.3 Summary of Local Monitoring Data.....	19
3.4 Key Findings	19
Section 4: Pollutant Sources & Loadings.....	21
4.1 Overview of Source Categories	21
4.2 Sub-basin Source Matrix.....	21
4.3 Estimated Pollutant Loadings	22
4.4 Key Findings	24
Section 5: Management Measures & Best Practices	25
5.1 Management Goals and Objectives	25
5.2 Recommended Management Measures	25
5.3 Prioritization Framework.....	32
5.4 Summary of Expected Outcomes	33
Section 6: Implementation Plan & Schedule.....	34
6.1 Implementation Framework.....	34
Implementation Schedule Overview	34
6.2 Estimated Funding Summary.....	35
6.3 Roles and Responsibilities	35

6.4 Milestones and Performance Indicators	36
6.5 Adaptive Management and Reporting	37
Section 7: Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting.....	38
7.1 Monitoring Goals and Objectives	38
7.2 Monitoring Design	38
7.3 Monitoring Parameters and Frequency	39
7.4 Data Management and Reporting.....	40
Reporting Schedule	40
7.5 Adaptive Management and Communication	40
Section 8: Public Outreach & Stakeholder Engagement	42
8.1 Outreach Goals and Objectives	42
8.2 Stakeholder Coordination Framework	42
8.3 Public Engagement Strategy.....	43
8.4 Communication Tools and Methods	43
8.5 Evaluation and Metrics.....	44
8.6 Summary.....	45
Section 9: Plan Maintenance & Updates	46
9.1 Purpose of Plan Maintenance	46
9.2 Review and Update Schedule	46
9.3 Data Integration and Management.....	46
9.4 Adaptive Management Framework.....	47
9.5 Institutional Sustainability	47
9.6 Summary.....	48
Section 10: References.....	49
10.1 References	49

Section 1: Introduction

Executive Summary

The Soque River Watershed lies entirely within Habersham County, in northeastern Georgia, and feeds into the Chattahoochee River system. The watershed spans roughly 160 square miles (approximately 102,400 acres) and about 56.3 % of Habersham County lies within the watershed's boundary.

The Soque River is a valuable resource: it provides drinking water supply (notably for Clarkesville), supports aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and offers recreational and scenic benefits for the public. Given its headwater location, the health of the Soque River is critically important to downstream waters, including Lake Lanier, where approximately one-sixth of the lake's water is derived from the Soque River.

However, portions of the Soque and its tributaries have historically failed to meet Georgia water quality standards, particularly for bacterial contamination (fecal coliform / E. coli), and biological impairments, due to excess sediment loading, which has led to an inclusion of segments on Georgia's 303(d) list of impaired waters. The root causes are primarily nonpoint sources related to agricultural runoff, urban stormwater, failing septic systems, and wildlife contributions. In addition, this watershed also has segments currently listed as Supporting (healthy) that need protection from future contamination through strategic planning.

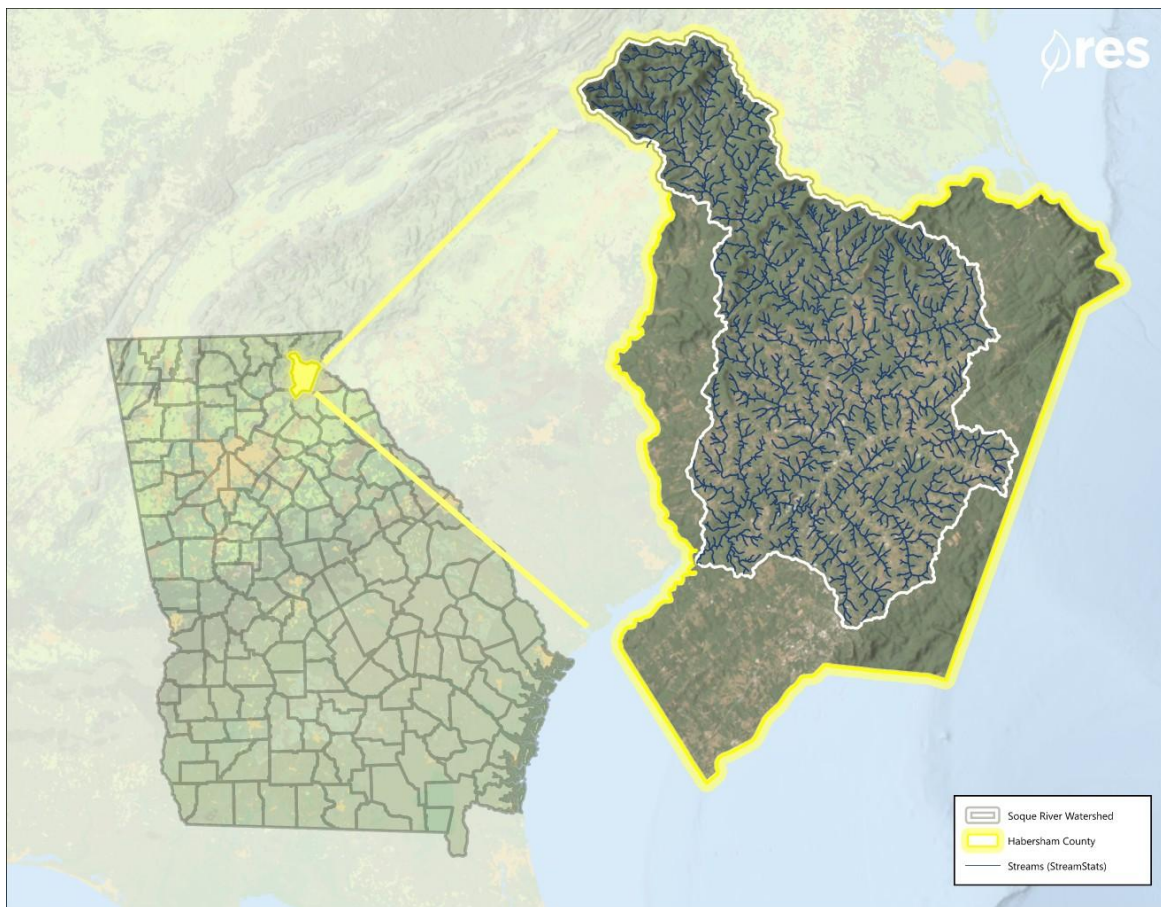


Figure 1. Location of Habersham County and the Soque River Watershed

Introduction & Context

This Watershed-Based Plan is a public-facing document developed for citizens, landowners, local governments, conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies. Its purpose is to present a clear overview of the Soque River Watershed's current conditions, challenges, and opportunities while outlining a practical path forward that includes measurable corrective management actions. The plan is designed to support the reversing of key impairments and sustaining improvements in both the short and long term. The plan also serves as a foundation for stakeholder engagement, local coordination, and future funding proposals, particularly under the U.S. EPA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Program and other restoration-focused initiatives.

This Watershed Protection Plan is intended to complement and build upon previously created WPPs and existing municipal stormwater planning efforts, including the City of Clarkesville's Green Infrastructure (GI) Implementation Plan, which provides a practical framework for managing stormwater runoff through green infrastructure practices such as

bioretention, permeable pavement, and targeted retrofit prioritization. Incorporating the principles and lessons learned from Clarkesville’s GI planning and previous WPPs helps ensure consistency between watershed-scale goals and on-the-ground municipal stormwater management, particularly in the most urbanized portions of the watershed.

The Soque River Watershed (Hydrologic Unit Code 0313000102) encompasses approximately 28.5 miles of the main stem of the Soque River, along with numerous tributaries extending across north-central Habersham County, Georgia. Portions of the watershed lie within the Chattahoochee National Forest, where elevations reach approximately 4,430 feet at Tray Mountain. The upper watershed is characterized by steep, forested terrain with limited development, while the lower reaches transition into more intensive land uses, including agricultural, suburban, and urban areas with expanding infrastructure.

Key tributaries to the Soque River include Deep Creek, Hazel Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and Yellowbank Creek. Each subbasin exhibits distinct land use patterns and pollutant sources, making sub-watershed-scale analysis essential for identifying pollutant loading hotspots and prioritizing restoration activities. These tributaries collectively influence the water quality and ecological integrity of the main stem.

Recent datasets from the National Land Cover Database (2019–2021) and the American Community Survey (2020–2023) indicate a continuing shift from forested and agricultural lands toward low-density residential and urban development. Habersham County’s population growth is concentrated around Clarkesville, Demorest, and Cornelia, with corresponding increases in impervious surface area and stormwater runoff potential. These patterns underscore the importance of integrating watershed management into local planning and development processes.

As a headwater system contained entirely within Habersham County, the Soque River Watershed offers a unique opportunity for coordinated management without the complexities of multi-county jurisdiction. The river ultimately contributes to the inflows of Lake Lanier, a critical drinking water reservoir for the Atlanta metropolitan area. Protecting the Soque’s water quality therefore has both local and regional significance for aquatic ecosystem health and downstream water supply reliability.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) evaluates surface waters under the state’s integrated 305(b)/303(d) reporting framework. Waters not meeting designated uses, such as recreation, fishing, or drinking water supply, are listed under 303(d) and may require the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or alternative restoration strategies. The 2024 EPD assessment cycle introduced refined listing methodologies and updated hydrologic boundary definitions.

Previous assessments identified a 29-mile segment of the Soque River as impaired for fecal coliform bacteria. A TMDL was established and subsequently revised to distribute required load reductions among point and nonpoint sources. Since then, targeted best management

practices (BMPs), including bioretention facilities, stormwater retrofits in Clarkesville, and improved agricultural runoff controls, have demonstrated measurable improvements in local water quality. These successes illustrate the effectiveness of collaborative, data-driven interventions and provide a strong foundation for ongoing watershed restoration and protection efforts.

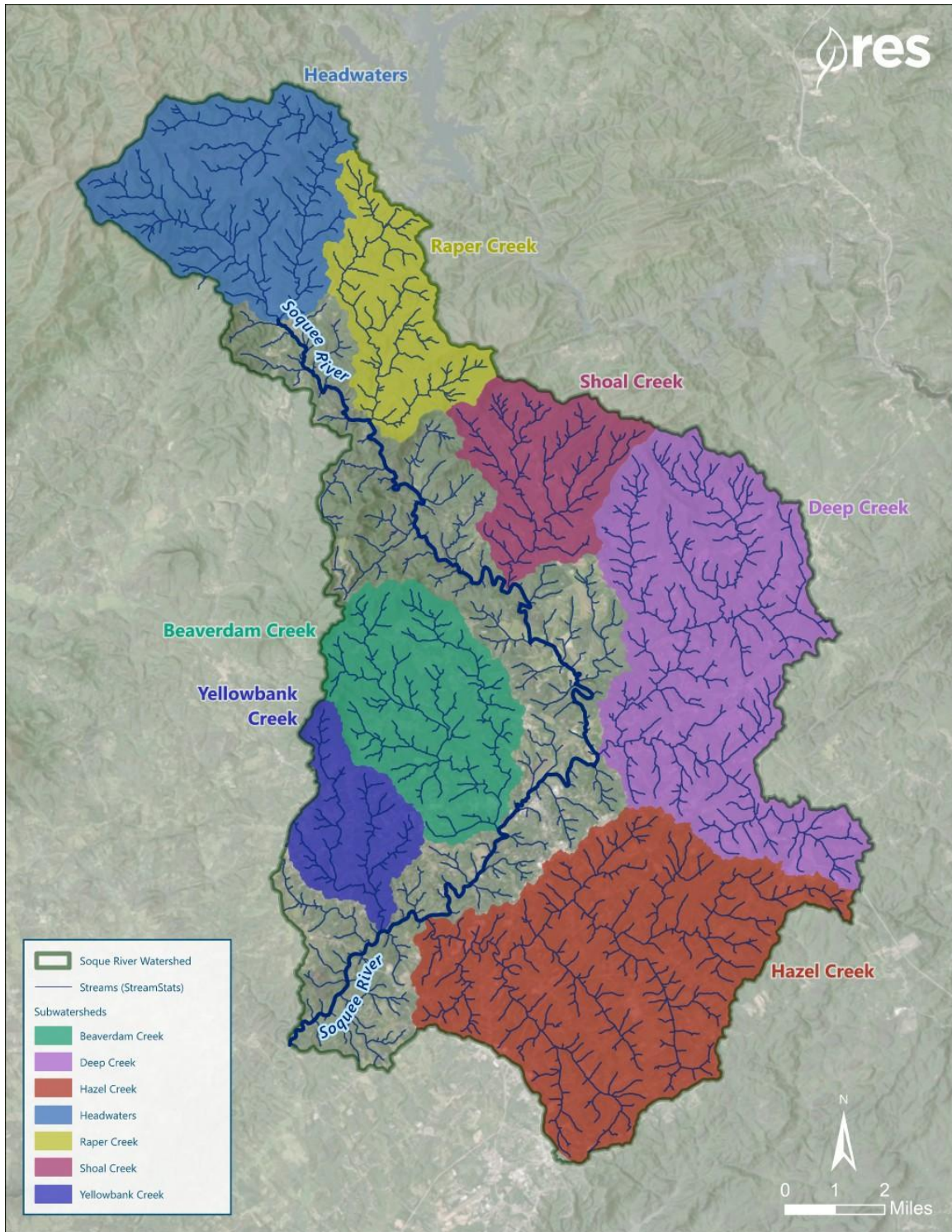


Figure 2. Subwatersheds within the Soque River Watershed

Section 2: Watershed Status and Updates

Land Cover & Land Use

The National Land Cover Database (NLCD) 2019 serves as the primary dataset for assessing land cover within the Soque River Watershed. Land-cover classes were extracted and clipped to the watershed boundary to calculate proportional areas of forest, agriculture, developed lands, wetlands, and impervious surfaces. Where feasible, these results can be compared with earlier NLCD datasets (2001, 2008, and 2017) to quantify temporal changes and identify trends in land-use conversion over the past two decades.

Regional analysis indicates that forest cover remains dominant in the upper headwaters, particularly within the Chattahoochee National Forest and surrounding upland slopes. However, valley and lower-elevation areas show an increasing prevalence of low-density residential development and expanded impervious surface coverage (not allowing fluid to pass through or penetrate; e.g., paved roads, concrete driveways, roofs, sidewalks, etc.). This pattern reflects accelerated encroachment into riparian and agricultural zones, contributing to habitat fragmentation and elevated runoff potential. Commercial and residential expansion has also resulted in lost riparian buffer and wetland areas that previously provided natural filtration and floodwater storage. The proximity of new development to stream corridors underscores the need for continued management practices that preserve vegetative buffers and minimize stormwater-driven pollutant loading.

Table 1. Land Cover Use Analysis

Land Cover / Use Class	Estimated % of Watershed (NLCD 2019)	Comments / Notes	Notes on Imperviousness Estimate*
Deciduous forest	~ 9.3%	Dominant in upper reaches	Very low imperviousness
Evergreen / mixed forest	~ 14.9%	Evergreen + mixed forest	Very low imperviousness
Shrub / scrub / transitional	~ 21.9%	Shrub/Scrub class (CONUS estimate)	Low imperviousness
Pasture / hay	~ 6.2%	Pasture/hay	Minimal imperviousness (mostly pervious)
Cropland / cultivated	~ 16.3%	Cultivated crops	Very low imperviousness
Developed / low intensity	~ 2.68%	Developed, open space (low intensity)	Moderate imperviousness (20-49% cover for this class)

Land Cover / Use Class	Estimated % of Watershed (NLCD 2019)	Comments / Notes	Notes on Imperviousness Estimate*
Developed / med-high intensity	~ 1.40%	Commercial/dense neighborhoods	Higher imperviousness (50-100% cover)
Wetlands / open water	~ 5.26%	Streams, ponds, riparian wetlands	Near zero imperviousness
Bare land / barren	~ 0.97%	Likely minimal in this region	Minimal imperviousness
Impervious Surface (overall)	~ 4-6%		

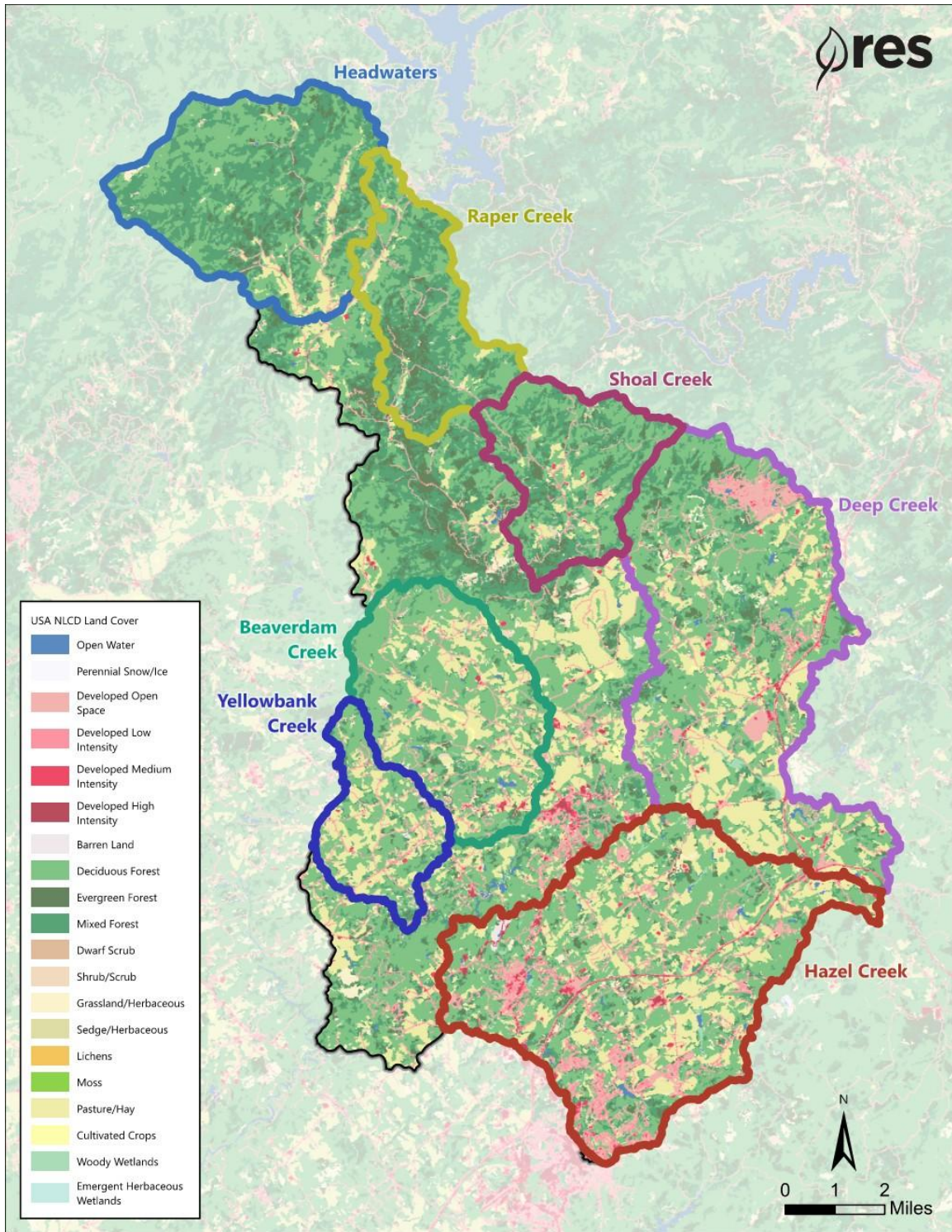


Figure 3. Landcover in the Soque River Watershed

Population & Growth Trends

Table 2. County and Municipal Growth

Metric	Value (Prior Plan)	Value (Current / Latest)	% Change
County population (Habersham)	~43,000	48,957	+13.39%
Population within watershed boundary	~24,600	~28,300	+15.04%
Number of housing units	~10,160	~11,120	+9.5%

Water Quality Status & Impairments

Table 3. Water Statuses

Waterbody	Reach Location	Criterion Violated	Potential Cause	Designated Use	Extent
Soque River	Goshen Creek to Georgia Hwy. 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	11.7 miles
Soque River	Georgia Hwy. 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek to Deep Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	5.9 miles
Soque River	Law Creek to Soque River	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment, E. Coli	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing, Drinking Water	3 miles
Shoal Creek	Nerve Branch to the Soque River	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	1.8 miles
Deep Creek	SR 17, Clarkesville to Chattahoochee	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	9 miles

Soque River Watershed Protection Plan (2026 Update)

Hazel Creek	Reservoir No. 12 (off Piney Woods Trail) to Law Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	4.1 miles
Hazel Creek	Law Creek to Camp Creek	Biological Impairment – Macroinvertebrates from Sediment, E. Coli	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing, Drinking Water	2.2 miles
Hazel Creek	Camp Creek to Soque River	Biological Impairment – Macroinvertebrates from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	3.3 miles
Sutton Mill Creek	Beaverdam Creek to the Soque River	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	0.7 miles
Camp Creek	Cornelia Branch to pond 0.3 miles downstream College Drive	E. Coli	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing, Drinking Water	2.1 miles
Camp Creek	Headwaters to Tributary 0.1 miles downstream Keller Rd	Trichloroethane (Facility under a corrective action plan)	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	1.1 miles
Raper Creek	Chastain Branch to Soque River	Supporting	N/A	Fishing	2.3 miles
Yellowbank Creek	Headwaters to Soque River	Supporting	N/A	Fishing	5.9 miles
Glade Creek	Deep Creek to Deep Creek	Supporting	N/A	Fishing	1.5 miles
Soque River	SR17, Clarkesville to Sutton Mill Creek	Supporting	N/A	Fishing, Drinking Water	0.5 miles
Soque River	Sutton Mill Creek to the Chattahoochee River	Supporting	N/A	Fishing	8.3 miles

Summary: Key Status Takeaways

- Forest and natural cover likely continues to dominate headwaters, buffering water quality, but development pressure in valley/lower subbasins is increasing.
- Population and housing growth concentrated near municipal boundaries increases stormwater and septic system stress in the watershed.
- Georgia EPD 2024 Integrated Report updates require careful comparison to historical listings due to criteria and reach mapping changes.
- Local monitoring data (SRWA, CRK, municipal labs) should be used to refine prioritization where EPD assessments are absent or coarse.
- The status overview above will guide prioritization of BMP deployment, monitoring, and public outreach in the implementation section.

- The SRWA monitoring program collects water quality data for Beaverdam Creek, a tributary to the downstream listed 6-mile segment of the Soque River. Beaverdam Creek is one of the five subwatersheds within the Soque River watershed where monitoring samples have shown high bacterial levels.

Section 3: Water Quality Assessment & Trends

3.1 Overview of 2024 EPD Integrated Report Listings

The 2024 Integrated Report continues to list certain segments of the Soque River and its tributaries as impaired for bacterial and biological indicators. The table below summarizes current impairment listings for reaches/segments located fully or partially within the Soque River watershed.

Table 4. Impairment Comparison to Former Plan

Reach / Segment Description	Parameter(s) Impaired	Assessment Category (2024)	Notes / Comparison to 2017 Plan
Soque River (3 reaches)	Bacteria (E. Coli), Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Not Supporting	No change from 2017 assessment
Deep Creek tributary	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Not Supporting	Not in 2017 plan
Hazel Creek (3 reaches)	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment, Biological Impairment – Macroinvertebrates from Sediment, E. Coli	Not Supporting	No change from 2017 assessment
Shoal Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Not Supporting	Not in 2017 plan
Sutton Mill Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Not Supporting	Not in 2017 plan
Camp Creek (2 reaches)	Bacteria (E. Coli), Trichloroethane	Not Supporting	Listed in 2024 assessment; not in 2017 plan

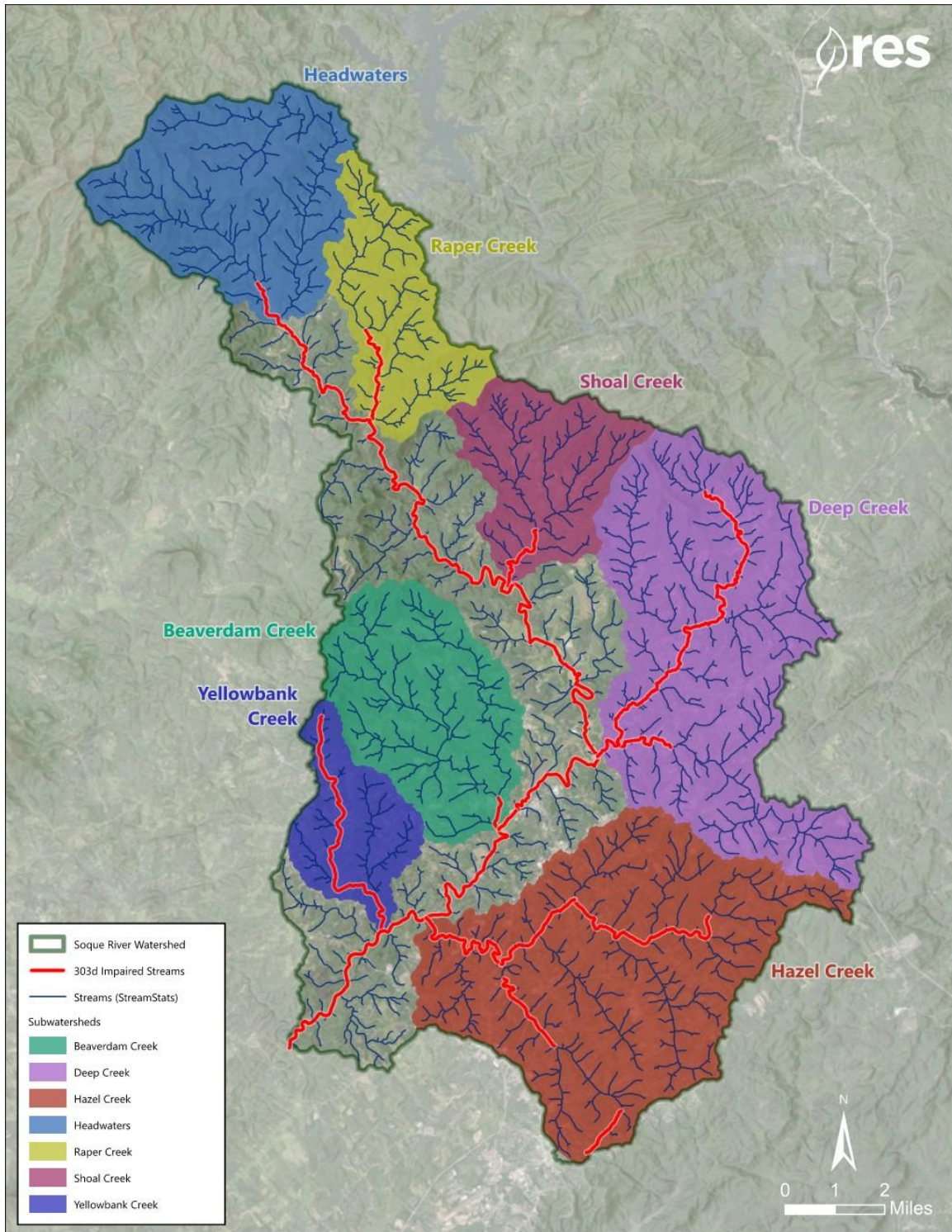


Figure 4. Stream segments not meeting designated uses (impaired)

3.2 Historical Comparison and Trend Analysis

Comparing the 2008, 2017, and 2024 Integrated Reports shows that bacterial impairment remains the primary concern, with persistent exceedances in lower and mid-reaches. Long-term trend data collected by SRWA and partners indicate seasonal variation, with elevated bacteria concentrations during summer and after major rainfall events.

A shift in assessment criteria complicates direct numeric comparison, but normalized E. coli data suggest partial improvement in several sub-watersheds since implementation of agricultural and stormwater BMPs.

3.2.1 Subwatershed Summary of Improving Reaches/Segments

Available monitoring and assessment information indicates improving trends in select locations following implementation of targeted BMPs. Table 4a summarizes these improving reaches/segments by subwatershed,

Table 4a. Improving Reaches Since Past Plan

SRWA Monitoring Locations	Evidence of improvement	Primary data source	Notes
Clarksville main stem (SRWA Site 3 area)	Local monitoring indicates improving E. coli conditions during portions of the monitoring record.	SRWA local monitoring (2012-2024)	Improvement is most apparent outside wet-weather peaks; continued corrective actions recommended.
Upper Soque / Headwaters	Generally below thresholds with stable conditions, indicating sustained protection in headwater areas.	SRWA local monitoring (2015-2024)	Protection-focused measures remain important to prevent future degradation.
Targeted BMP areas (multiple subwatersheds)	Multiple implemented agricultural and stormwater BMPs have been associated with measurable improvements in local water quality.	SRWA + partner implementation tracking	Use continued monitoring to confirm trends and attribute improvements to specific projects.

3.3 Summary of Local Monitoring Data

Local monitoring stations have been established by SRWA, CRK, and partner agencies to supplement EPD assessments. These data provide finer spatial and temporal resolution and can identify emerging trends or BMP effectiveness.

Table 5. Local Monitoring Data

Station / Location	Parameter(s) Monitored	Monitoring Period	Observations / Trends
SRWA Site 1 – Upper Soque	E. coli, Nutrients	2015–2024	Generally below thresholds; stable trend.
SRWA Site 3 – Clarkesville	E. coli, Turbidity	2012–2024	Elevated summer counts; gradual improvement.
CRK Site – Hazel Creek	E. coli, Nitrate	2010–2023	Variable; spikes after rainfall.
SRWA Site – Beaverdam Creek	E. coli, Turbidity	2015–2024	Local monitoring data exist for this tributary; periodic elevated bacteria have been observed. Continued monitoring is recommended to refine trends and support BMP targeting.

3.4 Key Findings

- Bacterial impairment remains the leading cause of non-attainment of state designated use (fishing, drinking water, recreation across multiple reaches.
- Headwater forested areas maintain excellent water quality, emphasizing the importance of conservation.
- Local monitoring confirms that targeted BMPs implemented since 2015 are producing

measurable improvements in certain sub-watersheds.

- Additional data collection is recommended for Beaverdam and Yellowbank Creeks to confirm trends and support potential restoration efforts.

- Although pathogens (*E. coli*) remain a critical water quality concern, sediment and nutrient loading represent equally important stressors in the Soque River watershed. Multiple stream segments are listed as biologically impaired due to sediment, indicating that excess fine sediment and associated habitat degradation are limiting aquatic life support. Nutrients, particularly soil-bound phosphorus transported with sediment, further exacerbate biological stress by contributing to algal growth and altered dissolved oxygen dynamics. Addressing stormwater-driven sediment and nutrient delivery is therefore essential to achieving full attainment of designated uses.

Section 4: Pollutant Sources & Loadings

4.1 Overview of Source Categories

Pollutant sources in the watershed can be grouped into the following categories:

- Agricultural runoff – livestock access to streams, pasture runoff, manure management.
- Urban stormwater – impervious surface runoff, construction erosion, and vehicle-related contaminants. Contributes to Sediment loadings, resulting in biological impairments to fish and macroinvertebrates.
- Failing septic systems– improperly maintained systems near waterways.
- Wildlife – natural background bacteria loads.
- Forestry operations – limited impact but possible sedimentation from unpaved access roads. Contributes to Sediment loadings, resulting in biological impairments to fish and macroinvertebrates.

While individual pollutant sources are identified by land use and activity, stormwater runoff is the dominant delivery mechanism transporting bacteria, sediment, and nutrients to surface waters throughout the watershed. Increased impervious cover, compacted soils, and altered drainage networks accelerate runoff volumes and velocities, resulting in more frequent and intense pollutant delivery during storm events. These storm-driven processes are closely linked to the biological impairments documented on Georgia’s 303(d) list, particularly those associated with sediment stress on fish and macroinvertebrate communities

Streambank erosion and unpaved or dirt roads are significant contributors to sediment loading within the watershed. Actively eroding banks deliver chronic sediment inputs during both baseflow and storm conditions, while dirt roads and stream crossings generate episodic but high-magnitude sediment pulses during rainfall events. Sediment originating from these sources frequently carries soil-bound phosphorus, particularly in agricultural areas, amplifying nutrient loading impacts downstream

Pollutant and sediment loads modeled with EPA’s STEPL tool and Region 5 Model, with supporting data from Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division (wildlife), University of Georgia Cooperative Extension (livestock), United States Department of Agriculture (agriculture) Habersham County Health Department (septic systems), and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (human population).

4.2 Sub-basin Source Matrix

Table 6. Pollutant Sources

Sub-basin	Agricultural	Urban / Stormwater	Septic	Wildlife / Natural	Overall Relative Contribution

Upper Soque	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
Clarksville Reach	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	High
Deep Creek	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Hazel Creek	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
Beaverdam Creek	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate

Relative contribution categories in Table 6 are based on normalized, modeled annual loading potential by source type within each sub-basin: Low = 0-20%; Moderate = >20-40%; High = >40%.

4.3 Estimated Pollutant Loadings

Table 7. Pollutant Loading Estimates (Entire Soque Watershed)

Pollutant	Primary Source(s)	Estimated Annual Load	Load Reduction Goal (%)	Notes
Bacteria (E. coli / Enterococci)	Livestock (manure runoff, pasture access), Failing septic systems, Urban stormwater outfalls	$\approx 1.08 \times 10^{16}$ (cfu/year)	40 %	Most critical for recreation use attainment; primary concern in Soque main stem and Beaverdam Creek; reductions achievable through fencing, septic repair, and stormwater retrofits.
Sediment (TSS)	Streambank erosion, unpaved roads, construction sites, pasture runoff	$\approx 24,260$ tons/yr	25 %	Sediment degrades macroinvertebrate habitat (Hazel Creek TMDL reach). BMPs: stabilization, riparian

				buffers, unpaved road improvements.
Nutrients (Total P)	Pasture fertilizer, livestock, septic seepage, urban stormwater	≈8,100 kg TP/year	30 %	TP load contributes to algal growth and oxygen demand in main stem; BMPs: nutrient management, septic maintenance.

Table 8. Suspended Sediment Yield and Load by Subwatershed

Subwatershed	Yield (tons/yr/mi ²)	Load (tons/yr)
Headwaters	101.7	1,759
Raper	102.7	986
Shoal	115.1	1,128
Deep	171.9	5,192
Beaverdam	164.2	2,397
Hazel	212.3	6,772
Yellowbank	200.2	1,341
Whole Watershed	151.8	24,260

Table 9. NPS fecal coliform production loadings – entire Soque River Watershed

Source	Loading (cfu/year)	% of total
Agriculture	5.32×10^{15}	49.1
Raper	7.36×10^{14}	6.8
Shoal	2.45×10^{15}	22.6
Deep	2.33×10^{15}	21.5
Total	1.08×10^{16}	100

4.4 Key Findings

- Agricultural and septic system sources continue to represent the highest bacterial load potential.
- Urbanized areas around Clarkesville contribute proportionally high stormwater pollutant loads despite small area.
- Nonpoint sources dominate total load; no major point sources are currently permitted within the watershed.
- Load reduction strategies should prioritize BMPs in Clarkesville, Deep Creek, and Hazel Creek sub-basins.

Section 5: Management Measures & Best Practices

5.1 Management Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal is to achieve water quality conditions in the Soque River and its tributaries that fully support designated uses (fishing, recreation, and drinking water).

Specific objectives include:

- Reduce bacteria loading to meet EPD criteria for recreation use (benchmark: achieve a 40% reduction watershed-wide by Year 10, with improving trends at priority monitoring stations).
- Reduce sediment and nutrient loading from agricultural and urban sources (benchmark: reduce sediment by 25% and total phosphorus by 30% by Year 10 in targeted sub-basins).
- Protect and restore riparian buffers, wetlands, and headwater streams (benchmark: restore at least 15 acres of riparian buffer by Year 8 and protect priority wetlands/headwaters from further loss).
- Improve public awareness and stewardship of watershed resources (benchmark: conduct ≥ 3 public outreach events per year and reach ≥ 250 participants per year).
- Establish a long-term monitoring and adaptive management framework (benchmark: maintain a minimum of 5 monitoring stations, publish annual monitoring summaries, and complete a comprehensive 5-year progress report).

5.2 Recommended Management Measures

Recommended BMPs are grouped by land-use category. Cost estimates reflect EPA and NRCS national averages adjusted for regional implementation (2023 USD).

Agricultural Best Management Practices

Table 10. BMPs and their Associated Costs

BMP Type	Primary Pollutant Targeted	Typical Cost Range (per unit)- '25 Estimate	Implementation Notes
Livestock exclusion fencing	Bacteria, Sediment	\$2.50–\$4.00 per linear foot	Install along streambanks to prevent direct livestock access; pair with alternative watering systems.
Stream crossing stabilization	Sediment	\$1,000–\$5,000 per site	Gravel or hardened crossings to minimize erosion.

Nutrient management planning	Nutrients (N, P)	\$15–\$40 per acre	Incorporate soil testing and targeted fertilizer application.
Cover crops / conservation tillage	Sediment, Nutrients	\$35–\$100 per acre	Reduce erosion and improve soil infiltration.
Riparian buffer restoration (native vegetation)	Bacteria, Sediment, Nutrients	\$2,000–\$8,000 per acre	Target degraded riparian zones adjacent to agricultural lands.



Figure 5. Livestock Exclusion Fencing and Riparian Buffer Restoration

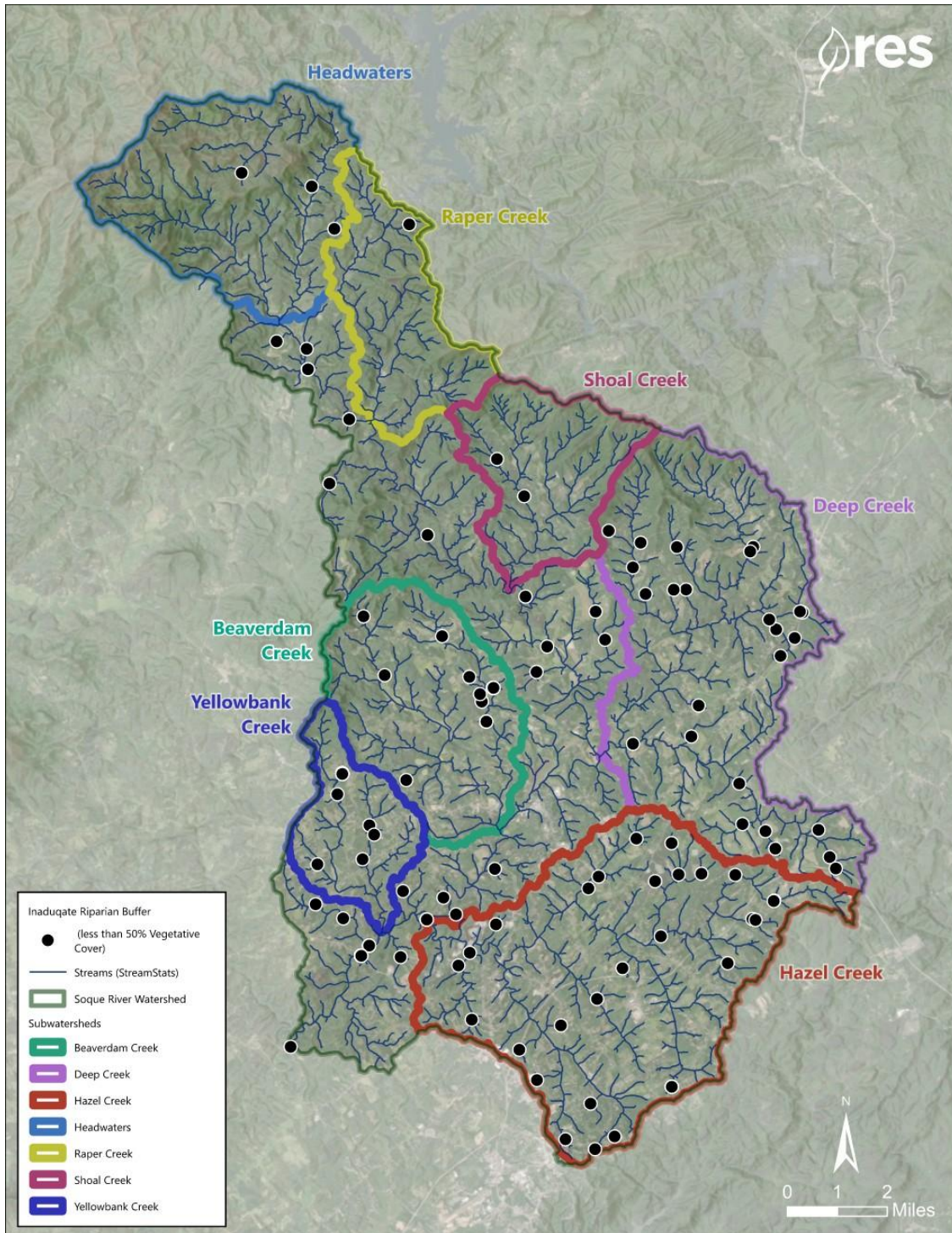


Figure 6. Riparian Enhancement Sites

Urban / Stormwater Best Management Practices

Table 11. BMP Summaries

BMP Type	Primary Pollutant Targeted	Typical Cost Range (per unit)- Land cost not included	Implementation Notes
Bioretention / Rain Garden	Bacteria, Nutrients, Metals	\$10–\$20 per sq. ft.	Retrofit parking lots, parks, and municipal properties.
Permeable pavement	Runoff volume, Sediment	\$8–\$15 per sq. ft.	Suitable for sidewalks, low-traffic areas.
Stormwater detention / retention pond retrofits	Sediment, Nutrients	\$20,000–\$60,000 per acre-ft	Enhance existing systems for water quality treatment.
Street sweeping program	Sediment, Nutrients	\$100–\$200 per curb-mile annually	Reduce sediment and nutrient accumulation in urban areas.



Figure 7. Examples of Bioretention BMPs and a Permeable Pavement System

Septic System Improvements

Table 12. Septic Improvements and Costs

BMP Type	Primary Pollutant Targeted	Typical Cost Range (per unit)	Implementation Notes
Septic system inspection and pump-out	Bacteria, Nutrients	\$300–\$500 per system	Encourage every 3–5 years through outreach and incentive programs.
System repair / replacement	Bacteria, Nutrients	\$4,000–\$12,000 per system	Prioritize near impaired reaches and shallow soils.
Cluster or community systems	Bacteria, Nutrients	\$15,000–\$30,000 per connection	Consider for small developments near sensitive areas.

Forestry and Riparian Practices

Table 13. Forestry BMPs and Costs

BMP Type	Primary Pollutant Targeted	Typical Cost Range (per unit)	Implementation Notes
Forest road stabilization	Sediment	\$2,000–\$5,000 per mile	Gravel surfacing, outsloping, and water bars.
Streamside management zones (SMZ)	Sediment, Temperature	Variable	Maintain 50–100 ft buffers; Georgia Forestry Commission standards.
Reforestation / riparian planting	Sediment, Nutrients	\$1,500–\$4,000 per acre	Target eroding or denuded riparian zones.

*Public Education and Outreach***Table 14. Educational BMPs and Costs**

Program / Activity	Target Audience	Approximate Cost Range	Implementation Notes
Watershed awareness campaign- Handbook (To be produced specifically for Soque River Watershed)	General public	\$2,500-\$7,500 per campaign	Outreach via schools, local media, and events.
Septic maintenance workshops	Homeowners	\$1,000-\$3,000 per event	Partner with county health department.
Farmer field days / BMP demonstrations	Agricultural producers	\$2,000-\$5,000 per event	Highlight cost-share programs (NRCS EQIP, GA EPD 319).
Municipality BMP Handbook- Awareness Campaign (To be produced specifically for Soque River Watershed)	Municipalities	\$2,500-\$7,500 per campaign	Partner with municipalities within watershed

5.3 Prioritization Framework

BMP implementation should be prioritized based on pollutant reduction potential, cost-effectiveness, feasibility, and geographic location. Sub-basins with the highest pollutant loading (Clarkesville Reach, Deep Creek, and Hazel Creek) are recommended as initial focus areas.

Potential streambank restoration and stabilization sites will be identified using a combination of GIS-based screening and field verification. Initial screening may include analysis of riparian buffer gaps, proximity to impaired stream segments, stream slope, channel confinement, and adjacent land use. These indicators are expected to be strongly positively correlated with streambank erosion severity. Priority sites will be those where active erosion coincides with inadequate riparian buffers and documented biological or

sediment impairments, allowing restoration efforts to achieve both water quality and habitat benefits.

Table 15. Improvement Prioritization

Sub-basin	Primary Pollutant(s)	BMP Category	Relative Priority	Lead Partners
Clarkesville Reach	Bacteria, Stormwater	Urban / Septic	High	City of Clarkesville, SRWA
Deep Creek	Bacteria, Sediment	Agricultural	High	Farm Bureau, NRCS, GA EPD
Hazel Creek	Bacteria	Agricultural / Septic	High	County Health Dept., SRWA
Beaverdam Creek	Sediment	Forestry	Medium	GFC, Private Landowners

5.4 Summary of Expected Outcomes

Implementation of these BMPs is expected to reduce bacteria loads by 40–50 %, sediment loads by 20–30 %, and nutrient loads by 25–35 % in target sub-basins over a 10-year period, per updated modeling. Restored riparian buffers, improved septic systems, and urban retrofits will enhance habitat conditions, improve water clarity, and promote public engagement.

Section 6: Implementation Plan & Schedule

6.1 Implementation Framework

Implementation will occur through coordinated actions among the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA), Habersham County, municipal governments (Clarkesville, Demorest, Cornelia), the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and community partners. The SRWP will serve as the primary coordinator, ensuring integration among agricultural, urban, septic, and outreach components.

Implementation phases are structured as follows:

- Short-term (Years 1–3): Focus on high-priority BMP installations, data collection, and public outreach.
- Mid-term (Years 4–6): Expand BMP coverage, initiate monitoring-based adaptive adjustments, and pursue new funding.
- Long-term (Years 7–10): Continue maintenance, evaluate performance, and pursue restoration of impaired reaches.

Implementation Schedule Overview

Table 16. Implementation Schedule

Action / Measure	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Estimated Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources
Agricultural BMPs (fencing, nutrient mgmt., buffers)	SRWP, NRCS, Farmers	Years 1–5	\$250,000–\$400,000	NRCS EQUIP, EPA 319, State Ag Grants
Urban stormwater retrofits (bioretention, permeable pavement)	City of Clarkesville, County Public Works	Years 2–6	\$250,000–\$400,000	EPA 319, GADOT LMIG, Local Capital Funds
Septic repair / replacement program	Habersham County Health Dept.	Years 1–8	\$100,000–\$250,000	EPA 319, Homeowner Match, USDA RD

Public education & outreach campaign	SRWP, GFC, County Extension	Years 1–10	\$5,000–\$15,000 per year	EPA 319, Private Sponsors
Riparian restoration & reforestation	SRWP, Landowners, NRCS	Years 3–10	\$150,000–\$250,000	USFS, EPA 319, Private Foundations

6.2 Estimated Funding Summary

Total estimated implementation cost over the 10-year planning horizon is approximately \$1.0–\$1.3 million, with a projected 60 % external funding (EPA Section 319 and other grants) and 40 % local and in-kind match contributions. Table 17 summarizes expected allocations by category.

Table 17. Funding Summary

Category	Estimated Total Cost	Local / Match Share	Grant / External Share
Agricultural BMPs	\$350,000	\$140,000 (40%)	\$210,000 (60%)
Urban / Stormwater Retrofits	\$400,000	\$160,000 (40%)	\$240,000 (60%)
Septic System Improvements	\$175,000	\$70,000 (40%)	\$105,000 (60%)
Riparian & Forestry Projects	\$200,000	\$80,000 (40%)	\$120,000 (60%)
Education & Outreach	\$75,000	\$30,000 (40%)	\$45,000 (60%)

6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Successful implementation requires coordination among multiple agencies, organizations, and stakeholders. The table below identifies primary and supporting roles for each major activity category.

Table 18. Role Breakdown

Entity / Partner	Primary Role(s)	Key Responsibilities
Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA)	Project Coordination	Lead overall implementation, reporting, and stakeholder coordination.
Habersham County Health Department	Septic Management	Administer inspection and repair program; maintain public records.
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Agricultural BMP Implementation	Technical support, and verification.
City of Clarkesville	Urban BMPs / Stormwater	Design and construct stormwater retrofits and bioretention systems.
Georgia EPD	Oversight / Funding	Approve 319 funding, track load reduction progress, and review reports.
Private Landowners	Participation / Stewardship	Install and maintain BMPs on private property.

6.4 Milestones and Performance Indicators

Milestones provide measurable targets to track progress over the 10-year planning horizon. Performance indicators will guide adaptive management and ensure accountability.

Table 19. Performance Indicators

Milestone / Performance Measure	Target Year	Indicator / Metric	Evaluation Method
Install 10 miles of livestock exclusion fencing	Year 3	Linear feet installed	Field verification, photo documentation
Complete 25 septic system repairs or replacements	Year 5	Systems upgraded	Health Dept. records

Retrofit 5 stormwater facilities in Clarkesville	Year 6	Projects completed	Engineering reports
Restore 15 acres of riparian buffers	Year 8	Acres restored	GIS monitoring, field visits
Achieve 40% bacteria load reduction in Deep Creek	Year 10	Load estimate reduction	Monitoring data comparison

6.5 Adaptive Management and Reporting

The plan will be implemented adaptively, with progress reviews conducted annually by SRWP and partners. Water quality and implementation metrics will be compiled into annual reports and a comprehensive 5-year reassessment. Adjustments will be made to BMP priorities, funding allocations, and outreach focus as needed based on monitoring results.

Section 7: Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

7.1 Monitoring Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the monitoring program is to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented management practices in reducing pollutant loads and improving water quality. Specific objectives include:

- Track water quality trends for key parameters (bacteria, nutrients, sediment).
- Evaluate performance of BMPs and load reduction effectiveness.
- Identify emerging or persistent problem areas requiring additional intervention.
- Support potential restoration of impaired reaches under Georgia's 305(b)/303(d)

Integrated Report.

- Inform adaptive management and public communication.

7.2 Monitoring Design

Monitoring will be designed to capture spatial and temporal variability across the watershed. Stations will be located to represent headwaters, mid-reaches, and downstream integration points, as well as key tributaries (Deep Creek, Hazel Creek, Beaverdam Creek).

Table 20. Future Monitoring

Monitoring Station	Waterbody / Location	Type of Monitoring	Purpose / Objective	Responsible Party
SRWA-01	Upper Soque (above Clarkesville)	Water Quality (Core Parameters)	Reference condition site for trend comparison.	SRWA
SRWA-02	Deep Creek	Water Quality + Flow	Track bacterial loading from agricultural areas.	SRWA / NRCS
SRWA-03	Hazel Creek	Water Quality + Biological	Assess nutrient and habitat conditions.	CRK / SRWA
SRWA-04	Clarkesville Mainstem	Water Quality + Flow	Measure cumulative urban/stormwater effects.	City / SRWA
SRWA-05	Beaverdam Creek	Water Quality	Evaluate rural residential and septic impacts.	SRWA / County

7.3 Monitoring Parameters and Frequency

Parameters and sampling frequencies are selected to align with Georgia EPD and recommendations for watershed plans. Sampling will occur more frequently during the first three years to establish baseline conditions, then adjusted based on observed trends. For monitoring to count towards restoring streams, a SQAP must be developed and implemented.

Targeted monitoring will be conducted at multiple locations along E. coli-listed stream segments to better isolate pollutant sources and prioritize corrective actions. This approach may include upstream/downstream bracketing, wet-weather sampling, and increased sampling density in high-priority reaches. Results will be used to refine project selection, support adaptive management decisions, and guide efforts to reduce or eliminate identified bacterial sources.

Table 21. Monitoring Standards

Parameter	Type	Suggested Frequency	Method / Standard Reference
E. coli / Enterococci	Bacteriological	Monthly (May–Oct), quarterly (Nov–Apr)	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP
Total Nitrogen (TN)	Nutrient	Quarterly	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP
Total Phosphorus (TP)	Nutrient	Quarterly	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP
Turbidity / TSS	Sediment / Physical	Monthly	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP
Dissolved Oxygen, pH, Temperature, Conductivity	Field Parameters	Monthly	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP

Flow / Discharge	Hydrologic	Continuous or event-based	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP
Macroinvertebrate community	Biological	Annually (spring)	To be determined through the development of an approved SQAP

7.4 Data Management and Reporting

All monitoring data will be stored in a centralized database maintained by SRWP. Data will be formatted according to EPA and EPD standards for submission to the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream or Water Quality Portal when applicable. Quality assurance protocols will include calibration records, duplicate samples (10%), and field blanks (5%) for analytical verification.

Annual summary reports will be prepared and shared publicly via the SRWP website, local government meetings, and partner newsletters. Reports will summarize water quality trends, BMP installation progress, and updated pollutant load estimates. A comprehensive five-year progress report will be developed to support plan updates and potential re-application for Section 319 funding.

Reporting Schedule

Table 22. Reporting Schedule

Report Type	Frequency	Content Summary	Responsible Entity
Annual Monitoring Summary	Annually (Q1)	Data results, trend graphs, BMP updates.	SRWP
Five-Year Comprehensive Report	Every 5 years	Full data analysis, load modeling, implementation progress.	SRWP
BMP Implementation Fact Sheets	As needed	Project highlights, before/after photos, cost data.	SRWP / Partners

7.5 Adaptive Management and Communication

Adaptive management ensures continuous improvement of watershed protection activities. Results from monitoring and reporting will be used to reassess management priorities, modify BMP designs, and guide funding applications. Key components include:

- Annual review meetings among SRWP, local governments, and partners to evaluate progress.
- Public reporting via online dashboards, newsletters, and community meetings.
- Revision of plan priorities based on measured pollutant reduction effectiveness and stakeholder feedback.

Effective communication will maintain stakeholder engagement, ensure transparency, and demonstrate accountability to funding partners and the public.

Section 8: Public Outreach & Stakeholder Engagement

8.1 Outreach Goals and Objectives

Outreach and engagement are designed to foster a long-term culture of watershed stewardship and public awareness. Key objectives include:

- Increase public understanding of watershed processes and nonpoint source pollution.
- Encourage voluntary adoption of BMPs by landowners and developers.
- Promote participation in monitoring and cleanup activities.
- Build partnerships among agencies, organizations, and citizens.
- Support implementation of the watershed plan through education, outreach, and incentives.

8.2 Stakeholder Coordination Framework

The Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) will lead stakeholder coordination. A multi-sector advisory group will guide implementation, composed of representatives from local governments, agricultural interests, non-profits, schools, and citizens. Meetings will occur quarterly during active implementation and semiannually thereafter.

Table 23. Stakeholders and Responsibilities

Stakeholder Group	Primary Role	Example Responsibilities
Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA)	Lead Coordination	Organize outreach events, manage communication, track participation metrics.
Habersham County Government	Policy & Support	Integrate watershed goals into planning and zoning ordinances.
City of Clarkesville	Urban BMP Implementation	Support stormwater education and demonstration projects.
Farm Bureau & NRCS	Agricultural Outreach	Promote cost-share programs and on-farm BMP adoption.
Schools / Colleges	Education & Youth Engagement	Integrate watershed curriculum, lead stream cleanups.
Local Nonprofits & Faith Groups	Volunteer Mobilization	Host events, recruit participants, share communications.

8.3 Public Engagement Strategy

The engagement strategy combines direct outreach, education, and media to reach residents, businesses, schools, and landowners. Engagement will emphasize transparency, inclusivity, and measurable outcomes. Activities are categorized into education, participation, and communication programs.

Table 24. Public Engagement

Outreach Activity	Target Audience	Frequency / Goal	Example Materials / Tools
Community Workshops	Residents, Homeowners	2 per year	Presentations, Q&A, printed guides
Watershed Festival / Soque River Day	General Public	Annual event	Booths, live demonstrations, partner exhibits
Septic Maintenance Campaign	Homeowners	Ongoing (biannual reminders)	Postcards, videos, service directory
Landowner BMP Education	Homeowners	Ongoing (biannual reminders)	Pamphlet, presentations
Farmer Field Days	Producers, Ag Advisors	1–2 per year	On-farm BMP tours, cost-share handouts
Classroom Presentations	Students (Grades 4–12)	Each school year	Posters, stream model, teacher kits
Volunteer Stream Cleanups	Community volunteers	Quarterly	Trash bags, gloves, signage, social media promotion

8.4 Communication Tools and Methods

Communication efforts will employ both traditional and digital platforms to maximize reach and accessibility. A dedicated SRWP webpage will serve as the central hub for updates, event announcements, and data visualization dashboards. Social media and email newsletters will be used to maintain consistent engagement.

Table 25. Communication Tools

Communication Tool	Purpose	Recommended Frequency
SRWP Website	Host plan documents, updates, and data dashboards.	Continuous / Updated quarterly
Email Newsletter	Share news, events, and funding opportunities.	Quarterly
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram)	Promote BMPs and highlight success stories.	Weekly posts
Press Releases	Announce milestones or major projects.	As needed
Printed Materials (Brochures, Fact Sheets)	Distribute at events and municipal offices.	Annual updates

8.5 Evaluation and Metrics

Evaluation metrics will be used to measure the effectiveness of outreach and engagement activities. Metrics include quantitative participation counts and qualitative assessments of awareness and behavior change. Data will be compiled annually and included in monitoring and implementation reports.

Table 26. Evaluation

Metric	Target / Goal	Evaluation Method	Reporting Frequency
Number of outreach events held	≥ 3 per year	Event attendance logs	Annual
Community participation in volunteer programs	≥ 250 participants per year	Sign-in sheets, online registration	Annual
Social media reach / engagement	10% increase annually	Platform analytics	Quarterly
Septic maintenance awareness	25% of homeowners reached in 5 years	Survey and tracking	Biennial

Student engagement	500 students per year	School participation records	Annual
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8.6 Summary

Sustained public engagement and stakeholder collaboration are essential to achieving long-term watershed protection. By maintaining consistent communication, celebrating visible successes, and offering meaningful opportunities for participation, the Soque River Watershed Association will build the trust, capacity, and shared ownership necessary for continued success.

Section 9: Plan Maintenance & Updates

9.1 Purpose of Plan Maintenance

The purpose of plan maintenance is to provide a structured process for evaluating progress toward watershed goals, incorporating new data, and revising management strategies as conditions change. Regular updates maintain eligibility for state and federal funding and ensure stakeholder engagement remains active and informed.

9.2 Review and Update Schedule

The plan will be reviewed annually and formally updated every five years, with the oversight of the SWRA. The update schedule is designed to correspond with data availability, funding cycles, and programmatic reporting requirements established by Georgia EPD and the U.S. EPA.

Table 27. Project Review

Review Type	Frequency	Purpose / Activities
Annual Internal Review	Every year	Assess progress on BMP implementation, outreach, and monitoring results; identify any corrective actions.
Five-Year Comprehensive Update	Every 5 years	Reevaluate watershed conditions, update data sets (NLCD, Census, EPD listings), revise goals, and reprioritize management measures.
Ten-Year Strategic Renewal	Every 10 years	Conduct full plan revision to incorporate emerging technologies, new regulations, and updated modeling data.

9.3 Data Integration and Management

New data from monitoring, land cover updates, and implementation tracking will be incorporated into plan revisions. SRWP will maintain a centralized GIS and data repository that compiles monitoring results, BMP locations, and load reduction estimates. This system will enable visualization of progress and facilitate more accurate modeling during updates.

9.4 Adaptive Management Framework

Adaptive management is central to plan maintenance, allowing continuous improvement based on monitoring feedback, stakeholder input, and evolving best practices. Each review cycle will include an assessment of BMP performance, pollutant reduction outcomes, and community engagement effectiveness.

Table 28. Adaptive Management

Adaptive Element	Description	Trigger for Adjustment	Responsible Party
Water Quality Targets	Adjust reduction goals or monitoring design.	Trends show insufficient improvement or new impairments appear.	SRWP / EPD
BMP Implementation	Modify type, location, or maintenance schedules.	Monitoring shows low BMP performance or maintenance issues.	SRWP / NRCS / City
Public Outreach	Refocus engagement strategy.	Declining participation or feedback indicates outreach gaps.	SRWP / County Partners
Funding Strategy	Seek alternative or supplemental sources.	Reduced funding availability or new grant opportunities arise.	SRWP / Local Gov.

9.5 Institutional Sustainability

Sustaining watershed management efforts over time requires stable leadership, funding, and community involvement. The SRWP will continue to act as the central coordinating entity, supported by its member organizations, local governments, and partner agencies. Long-term institutional sustainability will be achieved through diversification of funding, expansion of volunteer programs, and integration of watershed protection into local planning frameworks.

Table 29. Future Project Endeavors

Sustainability Strategy	Implementation Approach	Example / Partner
Funding Diversification	Apply for multi-source funding (319, NRCS, foundations).	EPA, GA EPD, Trout Unlimited
Capacity Building	Train volunteers and municipal staff for long-term BMP maintenance.	SRWP, County Extension
Policy Integration	Incorporate watershed priorities into local land-use and zoning ordinances.	County / City Planners
Partnership Expansion	Engage businesses and civic groups in sponsorship or volunteer programs.	Local Chamber of Commerce

9.6 Summary

Plan maintenance and updates will ensure that the Soque River Watershed Protection Plan remains effective, responsive, and science-based. Through ongoing data integration, adaptive management, and sustained partnerships, SRWP and its collaborators will maintain progress toward long-term water quality restoration and protection objectives.

Section 10: References

10.1 References

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Attachment 3:
Project Area Map-Mitigation BMPs &
Water Testing Sites

Blackhawk Fly-Fishing Mitigation Project & Water Testing Map

34.720472 (Latitude) & 83.578137 (Longitude)



- The blue arrows indicate the two key focus areas for BMP installation efforts (bank restoration projects-775 linear feet total)
- The orange arrows indicate the hillside and riverbank area for BMP installation efforts (a corrective erosion water run-off project)
- The three red arrows indicate key water quality monitoring locations for all BMP project efforts.

Attachment 4:
2026 Updated SRWA SQAP



Habersham County and the Soque River Watershed Association

Environmental Partnering Effort

2026 Sampling Quality and Assurance Plan for key sections of the Soque River and its Watershed

(Revised July 2026)

Section 1: Introduction and Study Objectives

1.1 Background

The Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) and Habersham County have entered into partnership to assess the water quality of various waterway areas within the Soque River and its watershed. Some of the areas to be sampled and tested are identified as follows, which are currently on Georgia's 2024 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Streams:

- An 11.7-mile stretch of the Soque River (Goshen Creek to GA Hwy 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek) and 5.9 miles of the Soque River (GA Hwy 197 just below the mouth of Shoal Creek to Deep Creek) = Total 17.6 miles are impaired for Bio Fish due to Sediment.
- Impaired sites for Bio Fish due to Sediment and excessive levels of *E. Coli* bacteria:
 - A 3.0-mile stretch of the Soque River (Deep Creek to Highway 17)
- Impaired sites for Bio Macroinvertebrates and excessive levels of *E. Coli* bacteria:
 - A 2.2-mile stretch of Hazel Creek (Law Creek to Camp Creek)
- A 2.1-mile section of Camp Creek (Cornelia Branch to the pond 0.3 miles downstream on College Drive) is impaired due to excessive levels of *E. Coli* bacteria

In addition, the SRWA will be monitoring other sites North of Clarkesville, GA to the end of Goshen Creek Road in Batesville, GA that could also be impaired but are not listed.

The Soque River is identified as a 29-mile segment of waterway on Georgia's 2024 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Streams and its watershed incorporates over 54% of all of Habersham County. With the recent update of the Soque River Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) the SRWA organization, with the assistance of the Habersham County Management Team, will utilize the new water quality testing data to implement key impairment reversal programs over the next five-year period.

1.2 SQAP Objective

The objective of this Sampling Quality and Plan (SQAP) is to generate Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) qualified water quality data for *E.coli* bacteria in the Soque River watershed from the beginning of Goshen Creek Road just off of Highway 197N to the Pitts Park location in Clarkesville, GA. This water quality testing data will provide the SRWA with an updated assessment of current impairment conditions for the sites monitored. Additionally, the data may be used by GAEPD in 305(b)/303(d) listing decisions based on Georgia *E.coli* bacteria standards for Drinking, Fishing, and Recreation designated uses.

Beginning in 2024, EPD began to sample streams monthly for *E. coli* rather than collecting data for the calculation of quarterly geometric means. Since data is collected monthly, data will be compared against the STV only. EPD began monthly sampling because a review of historical *E.*

coli data showed similar assessment results whether data were compared against the geometric mean or STV.

Drinking and Fishing Designated Use

Bacteria: *E. coli* is the bacterial indicator species used for freshwater streams, lakes, and beaches. The criteria consist of both a geometric mean and a statistical threshold value (STV). The geometric mean and STV apply to data collected within a 30-day period. For waters with a designated use other than Recreation the criteria are seasonal and are: May – October (geometric mean 126 count/100 mL, **STV 410 count/100 mL**); November – April (geometric mean 265 count/100 mL, **STV 861 count/100 mL**). Preferred minimum data set for data collected monthly: 12 monthly samples per year.

Listing Assessments: Monthly Samples: Since only 1 sample is taken per month, there are not enough data available to calculate a meaningful geometric mean. Instead, the results of each monthly sample are compared with the STV.

- If more than 10% of the monthly data exceed the STV, a water is assessed as **not** supporting its use designation.
- If 10% or less of the monthly data exceed the STV, a water is eligible for delisting (restored to supporting status).

Recreation Designated Use

Bacteria: *E. coli* is the bacterial indicator species used for freshwater streams, lakes, and beaches. For waters with a use of Recreation, the criteria are equal to the May – October values (geometric mean 126 count/100 mL, **STV 410 count/100 mL**) for the whole year.

1.3 Organization and Liaison Information

The SRWA and Habersham County will be the sole proprietors of this project. Our water sampling and testing liaison will be EMI, Engineering Management, Inc., located in Lawrenceville, GA. EMI President, Fletcher Holliday and Colby Jones, Water Resource Coordinator for the NE GA market, will be key players through the SQAP execution effort, and their subsidiary, EMI Lab Services, which meets the state lab accreditation requirements in Chapter 391-3-6-.03(13). Colby can be reached by email (cjones@eminc.biz) and by phone at 470-216-2650 or by mail at EMI, Attention: Colby Jones, 303 Swanson Drive, Lawrenceville, GA, 30043.

Section 2. Sampling Plan

2.1 Location

In total the EMI Team will be sampling twelve specific locations under this SQAP effort. Please find outlined below a chart listing all twelve sampling sites and their GPS longitude and latitude coordinates. [Note: all coordinates are withing 10-15 feet of the actual sampling sight.] All twelve sampling locations will be identified on a map provided in the appendix section of this SQAP document.

Table 1. Sampling Locations: 12 total sites (site map located in the Appendix)

2026 SRWA SQAP Water Sampling Site Information-5-26-26			
Waterways Involved and Location Descriptions	Coordinates	Sampling Location Description	Sample Site ID
The Soque River on Goshen Mountain Road	34.77566° N, 83.60450° W	From the bridge on Goshen Mountain Road	GM-1
The Soque River in Batesville, GA on Highway 197N	34.75414° N, 83.60733° W	From the bridge on Highway 197N	BR-1
The Soque River at the Mark of the Potter business location-Highway 197N	34.72901° N, 83.58859° W	Access to the river from the parking lot off of Highway 197N	MP-1
Lower Raper Creek on Oakey Mountain Road	34.74382° N, 83.57727° W	From the bridge on Oakey Mountain Road	LR-1
The Soque River on the Blackhawk Fly Fishing property on Highway 197N	34.72421° N, 83.58059° W	From the Blackhawk Fly Fishing Property off of Highway 197N	BF-1
Shoal Creek at the north most bridge on Highway 197N	34.68051° N, 83.53371° W	From the north most bridge over Shoal Creek on 197 N	SC-1
The Soque River at the intersection of Ben Jones Rd. and Highway 197N	34.67910° N, 83.53271° W	From the bridge on Highway 197N next to Ben Jones Road	BJ-1
The Soque River on Hardman Road	34.65427° N, 83.51292° W	From the bridge on Hardman Road	HR-1
The Soque River on Wall Bridge Road	34.63892° N, 83.50838° W	From the bridge on Wall Bridge Road	WB-1
The Soque River located at Pitts Park in Clarkesville, GA	34.61885° N, 83.52897° W	Enter at Pitts Park and walk down to the stream	PP-1
Hazel Creek located at the bridge on Double Bridge Road south of Lakewood Cove Drive	34.58476° N, 83.51828° W	From the bridge on Double Bridge Road	HC-1
Camp Creek located in the Piedmont University Campus on College Drive at the bridge	34.562590° N, 83.539178° W	From the bridge on College Drive	CC-1

2.2 Sampling Parameter, Methods, and Resources

There is one parameter being sampled at all twelve locations. In-situ data will be collected, and *E. coli* bacteria will be sampled at all twelve sites. Samples will be collected on monthly basis irrespective of weather conditions. Sampling for a river of this size necessitates that sampling occurs in the fastest/deepest location available. A grab sample will be collected as close as possible to the thalweg as can be accomplished in a safe manner.

The sample collection procedure used is detailed below:

1. Prior to sampling, calibrate all meters and record values on appropriate calibration sheets. Make sure calibration standards are up-to-date and free of contaminants prior to performing calibrations. File completed calibration sheets at Habersham EMI/MPE office. If the meter does not calibrate to the standards, seek assistance with meter calibration or utilize a meter that will calibrate.
2. In-situ readings shall be taken each time the streams are sampled. Perform in-situ monitoring prior to sample collection, as entering the stream before taking these measurements could impact in-situ data. Dissolved oxygen (DO), Temperature (Celsius) and Specific Conductivity (SC) will be collected using a YSI Pro 2030 meter and pH will be collected using an OAKTON pH 6+ meter. The sample collector is to lower the probes into the water relatively close to the center of the stream and approximately several inches above the substrate. Give proper time for the meters to stabilize. Record all in-situ data properly into Surver123 in the correct section. In-situ data includes dissolved oxygen (DO) & DO%, pH, temperature (Celsius), electrical conductivity (EC), specific conductivity (SC), turbidity, and TSS.
3. Turbidity will be measured using a Portable HACH 2100Q Turbidimeter. The sample collector will wade approximately to the middle of the stream, downstream of the pH and DO meter ensuring they are not affecting the accuracy of those two instruments. While facing up stream, the sample collector will wash the vial twice, collect the sample on the third pass, and place the vial in the Turbidimeter and allow it to read the turbidity.
4. *E. coli* bacteria and TSS sampling: With waders or boots on, enter the stream upstream of in-situ sample collections and proceed to the center point. Use your own judgment about depth and safety when entering a stream. Never enter further than you feel comfortable. SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.
5. Facing upstream, with the use of non-latex gloves for *E. coli*, place the sample containers with the cap still on in an undisturbed area of water to collect the sample. When sampling *E. coli*, use sterile bottles, taking care not to contaminate the bottle while collecting the sample. When sampling for TSS, use a half gallon TSS sample container. All samples should be free of debris (i.e., sticks, leaves, etc.)
6. When sampling is complete replace the cap, transport all *E. coli* and/or chemical water quality samples at temperatures below 6°C to EMI Lab Services. Do not store bacteriological samples with chemical water quality samples. Do not use ice for bacteriological samples unless they are properly placed in zip lock bags; only use ice packs to ensure sample integrity. Ensure all chains of custody are completed and all sample bottles are labeled completely. Chain of custodies will be left with EMI Lab.
7. EMI Lab Services will take care of running analysis on all samples brought to them.

The initial 12-month EMI sampling program will begin in the second quarter of 2026, starting June 2026, through May of 2027. All samples will be taken in sterile plastic bottles (with sodium thiosulfate) and placed in plastic bags and transported in cooler at <6°C coolers covered in ice. *E. coli* Determination Method 9223B Standard Methods, 23rd Edition is the method our

department uses for *E.coli* bacteria. This is an IDEXX method that utilizes the Colilert media. The range of these methods differs. For method 9223B (*E. coli*) the range for an undiluted sample is from 1 to 2,419.6 MPN, but this range will vary on diluted samples based on the dilution factor. All samples will be sealed and incubated within the 8-hour hold time.

The test for TSS is the TSS Determination Method SM2540D. All samples will be sealed and processed within the 7-day hold time. TSS can be collected during a Dry or Wet weather sampling event. Dry weather sampling shall be performed when the weather is dry, defined as the absence of a rainfall event for a minimum of three (3) days prior to performing the sampling. Wet weather sampling shall occur within 24 hours after a rainfall event of at least 0.2 inches of rain which has occurred at least 72 hours since the last storm event (i.e. Wet weather samples should be pulled from a rainfall of 0.2 inches or more which was preceded by at least three (3) days of dry weather.)

The EMI Team, Engineering Management, Inc. has full-time field coordinator, Colby Jones, for the Northeast Georgia market to conduct all water sampling efforts. All sampling materials and needed equipment will be provided by the EMI operation.

Section 3. Quality Assurance Plan.

For this plan, all the requirements of the Water Protection Branch Quality Assurance Manual (June,1999) and Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 136 will be adhered to. All sampling and testing will be conducted by EMI and their internal certified water testing lab, EMI Lab Services, LLC, located at 126 Mahaffey Street, Jefferson, GA, 30549.

Sample collection includes taking a 100 mL sample in a sterile bottle (with sodium thiosulfate) with gloved hands. That sample will be placed in a cooler covered in ice and held no more than 8 hours at <6° C. Undiluted samples will be run whenever the turbidity of the water is low. If a dilution is required because of increased turbidity from a rain event, a blank will be run on an autoclaved glass dilution jar. Samples will be pipetted with sterile pipettes when a dilution is required.

Sample collection of all in-situ data information (dissolved oxygen (DO), & DO%, pH, temperature (Celsius), electrical conductivity, (EC), specific conductivity (SC), turbidity, and TSS) will be recorded by the EMI field coordinator and shared with the SRWA Team monthly. The shared file will be kept in the SRWA Office database for up to seven years. In addition, data sheets will be kept for all sample runs that include the date of sampling, the date of the testing beginning, incubation time and temperature, sample volumes (dilutions), time, and date removed from incubation, incubation temperature, and results. In addition, all field data sheets will be kept. [Note: all in field data sheets will contain in-situ data required].

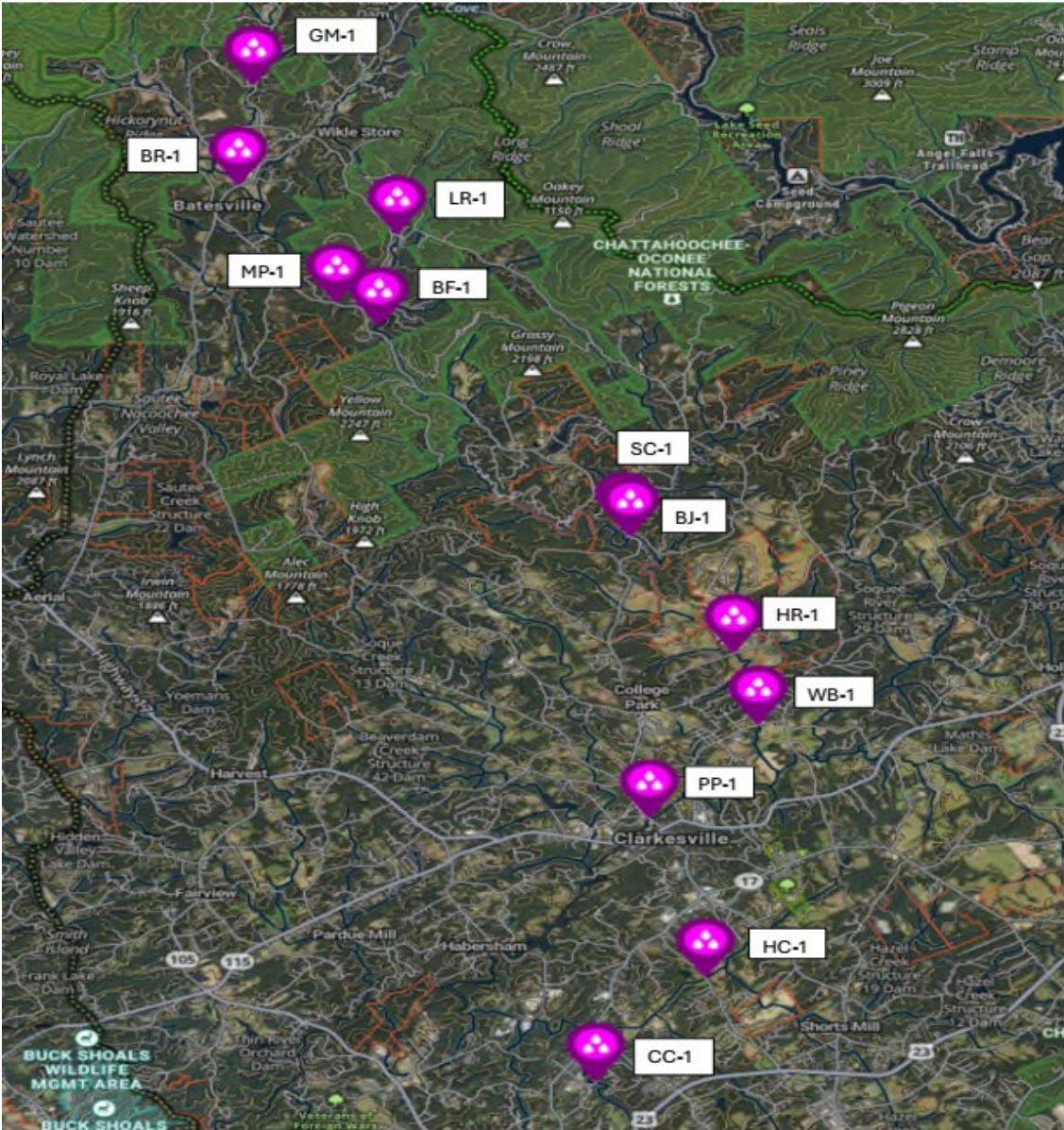
All EMI personnel involved with both the in-field sampling efforts and the EMI Lab Services, LLC, have extensive experience with sampling techniques as well as test procedure training. Note: please refer to the Certification of Accreditation in the Appendix Section for further details and information.

The methods used for this SQAP will be Standard Method 9223B as listed in the 23rd Edition. The Quality Assurance/Quality Control measures required by this method will be implemented. Adequate records on analytical procedures and the QA/QC measures shall be maintained to document their proper implementation and performance, and the records shall remain on file and available for review for a minimum of three years.

Appendix

Note: See attached PDF document for all 12-water sampling location
coordinates and site pictures

SRWA Sample Site Map



SRWA and EMI 2026
Water Quality Sample Site
Information
Rev: 5-20-26

The Soque River on Goshen Mountain Road



34.77566° N, 83.60450° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B046'32.4%22N+83%C2%B036'16.2%22W/@34.77566,-83.6070749,741m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.77566!4d-83.6045?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

The Soque River in Batesville, GA on Highway 197N



34.75414° N, 83.60733° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B045'14.9%22N+83%C2%B036'26.4%22W/@34.75414,-83.6099049,741m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.75414!4d-83.60733?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

The Soque River at the Mark of the Potter Business Location on Highway 197N



34.72901° N, 83.58859° W

[https://www.google.com/maps/place/34°43'44.4"N+83°35'18.9"W/@34.72901,-83.5911649,741m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.72901!4d-83.58859?entry=tту&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw==](https://www.google.com/maps/place/34°43'44.4)

Lower Raper Creek on Oakey Mountain Road



34.74382° N, 83.57727° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B044'37.8%22N+83%C2%B034'38.2%22W/@34.74382,-83.5798449,741m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.74382!4d-83.57727?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDS0ASAFQAw%3D%3D

The Soque River on the Blackhawk Fly Fishing Property on Highway 197N



34.72421° N, 83.58059° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B043'27.2%22N+83%C2%B034'50.1%22W/@34.72421,-83.5831649,741m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.72421!4d-83.58059?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

Shoal Creek at the north most bridge on Highway 197N



34.68051° N, 83.53371° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B040'49.8%22N+83%C2%B032'01.4%22W/@34.68051,-83.5362849,742m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.68051!4d-83.53371?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

The Soque River at the Intersection of Ben Jones Road and Highway 197N



34.67910° N, 83.53271° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B040'44.8%22N+83%C2%B031'57.8%22W/@34.6791,-83.5352849,742m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.6791!4d-83.53271?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIXMDS0ASAFAw%3D%3D

The Soque River on Hardman Road



34.65427° N, 83.51292° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B039'15.4%22N+83%C2%B030'46.5%22W/@34.65427,-83.5154949,742m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.65427!4d-83.51292?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

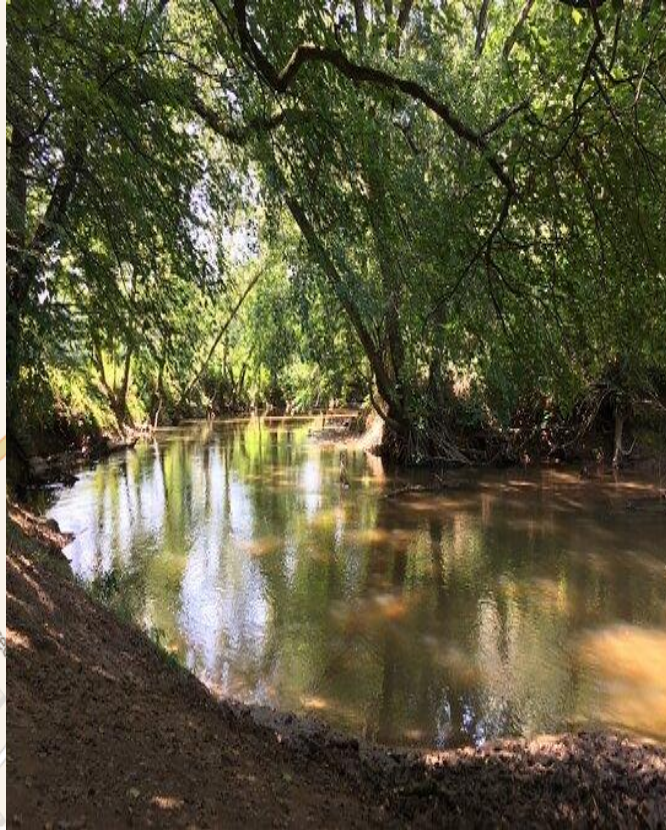
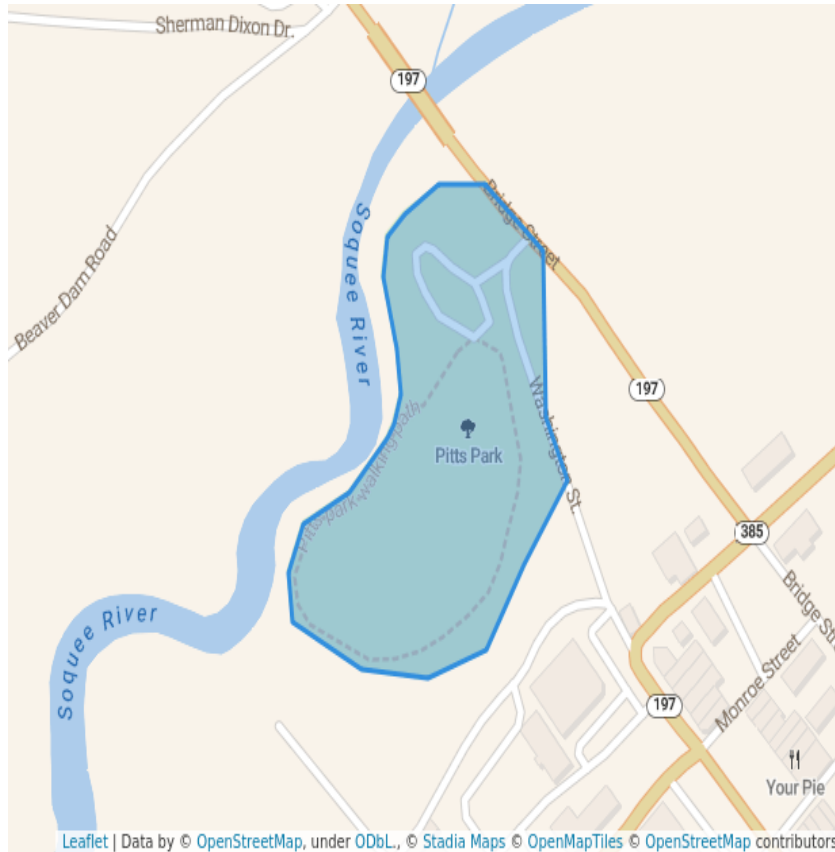
The Soque River on Wall Bridge Road



34.63892° N, 83.50838° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B038'20.1%22N+83%C2%B030'30.2%22W/@34.63892,-83.5109549,742m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d34.63892!4d-83.50838?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDQyOS4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D

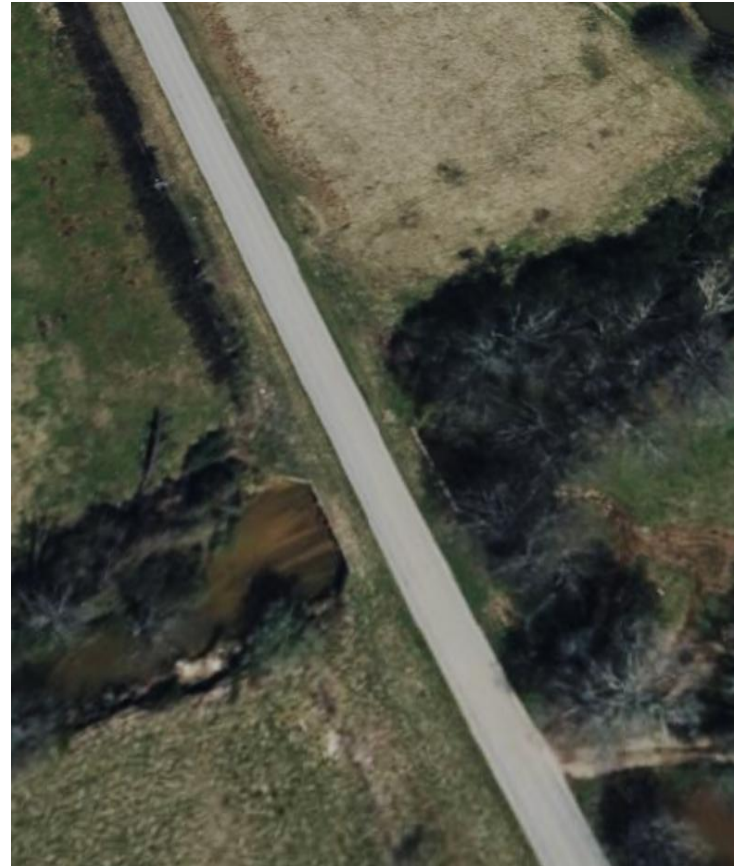
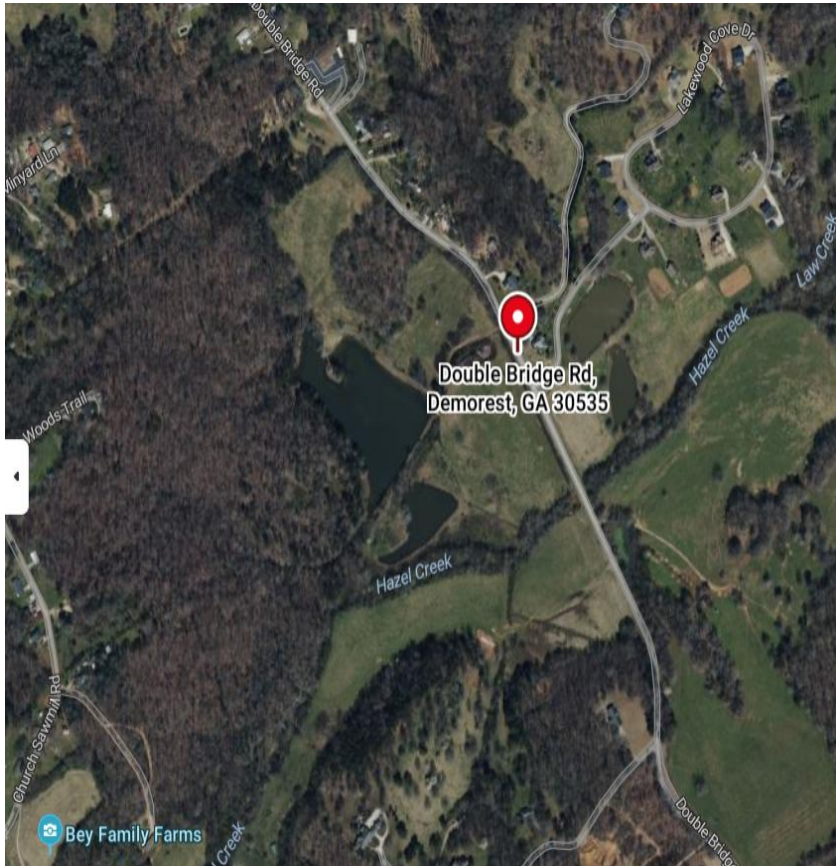
The Soque River Located at Pitts Park in Clarkesville, GA



34.617214° N, 83.528694° W

<https://www.bing.com/copilotsearch?q=longitude+and+latitude+for+pitts+park+clarkesville+ga+map&FORM=CSSCOP>

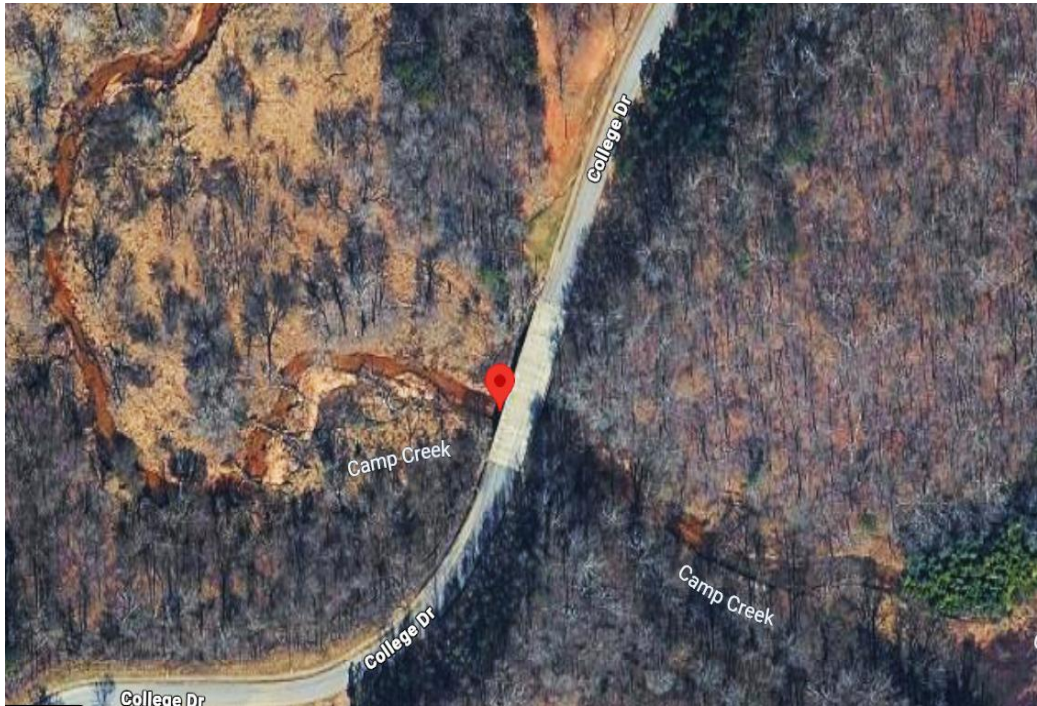
Hazel Creek Located at the Bridge on Double Bridge Road south of Lakewood Cove Drive



34.617214° N, 83.528694° W

https://www.bing.com/maps/search?mepi=57%7E%7EEmbedded%7ELargeMapLink&ty=18&v=2&sV=1&FORM=MIRE&q=Double+Bridge+Rd%2C+Demorest%2C+GA+30535&ppois=34.5932633352255_-83.5265169251089_Double+Bridge+Rd%2C+Demorest%2C+GA+30535_%7E&cp=34.584768%7E-83.518129&lvl=19.5&style=r

Camp Creek Located in the Piedmont University Campus on College Drive at the Bridge



34.562590° N, 83.539178° W

https://www.google.com/maps/place/34%C2%B033'45.3%22N+83%C2%B032'21.0%22W/@34.5626997,-83.5395568,249m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m13!1m8!3m7!1s0x8858b3a95c66fb69:0xd422b8772bb25902!2sDemorest,+GA+30535!3b1!8m2!3d34.565098!4d-83.5451724!16zL20vMHJ4MWM!3m3!8m2!3d34.56259!4d-83.539178?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI2MDUyMC4wIKXMDSOASAFQAw%3D%3D

Attachment 5:
SRWA Calculations Sheet
for In-Kind Values

Attachment #5 - Updated 8-26-26

FY25-08 Section 319(h) Grant Calculation Sheet

Blackhawk Mitigation Project

SRWA In-kind Matching Fund Areas:

- **SRWA Travel: Non-federal Matching Funds: \$8,700.00**
 - **SRWA Mitigation Manager-Brad Coppedge**
 - Project site visits (2 days/week) X 24 miles traveled X 150 total weeks (3-year period) X \$.725/mile = **\$5,220.00**
 - **SRWA EBM-Elijah Keene**
 - Project site visits (2 days/week) X 24 miles traveled X 100 total weeks (3-year period) X \$.725/mile = **\$3,480.00**
- **SRWA Supplies: Non-federal Matching Funds: \$2,770.00**
 - Shovels for volunteers: 30 shovels X \$32 = **\$960.00**
 - Rakes for volunteers: 30 rakes X \$22 = **\$660.00**
 - Working Gloves for volunteers: 30 gloves X \$15 = **\$450.00**
 - Wheelbarrows for volunteers: 5 wheelbarrows X \$140 = **\$700.00**
- **SRWA Other: Non-federal Matching Funds: \$1,932.00**
 - **Water Sampling & Testing (EMI)-*E. coli*, Turbidity & TSS**
 - Lab Fees: \$27/cost per sampling X 12 quarters X 3 sites = **\$972.00**
 - Sampling Fees: \$80/hour for all 3 sites X 12 quarters = **\$960.00**
 - **SRWA Personnel: Non-federal Matching Funds (rounded to nearest whole dollar amount): \$6,628.00**
 - **SRWA EBM (Executive Business Manager)**
\$50,000/year @ 0.05 FTE at 34% for 3 years = **\$2,550.00**
 - **SWRA Mitigation Project Manager-Brad Coppedge**
\$41.00 per hour X 30 hours/week X 52 weeks/year @ 0.05 FTE at 34% for 3 years = **\$3,262.00**
 - **SRWA Treasurer**
\$41.00 hour X 3 hours/week X 52 weeks/year @ 0.05 FTE at 34% for 3 years = **\$326.00**
 - **SRWA Bookkeeper**
\$1,800/year @ 0.05 FTE at 34% for 3 years = **\$92.00**
 - **SRWA Lab Tech**
\$7,800.00/year @ 0.05 FTE at 34% for 3.0 years = **\$398.00**

Attachment 6:
Habersham County
Calculations Sheet
for In-Kind Personnel Values

Jillian Thompson

Current yearly amount	Annual Salary	County Paid Health	County Paid Dental	County Paid Vision	County Paid Life	Total
	\$ 51,500.80	\$ 13,103.48	\$ 279.24	\$ 65.00	\$ 149.76	\$ 65,098.28

% Time 15%

Total Contribution over 3 Years \$ 29,294.23

Kiani Holden

Current yearly amount	Annual Salary	County Paid Health	County Paid Dental	County Paid Vision	County Paid Life	Total
	\$ 114,017.54	\$ 34,877.18	\$ 279.24	\$ 65.00	\$ 312.00	\$ 149,550.96

% Time 5%

Total Contribution over 3 Years \$ 22,432.64

Katherine DeVane

Current yearly amount	Annual Salary	County Paid Health	County Paid Dental	County Paid Vision	County Paid Life	Total
	\$ 47,840.00	\$ 12,573.86	\$ 279.24	\$ 65.00	\$ 149.76	\$ 60,907.86

% Time 20%

Total Contribution over 3 Years \$ 36,544.72

Total Personnel Contribution Over 3 Years \$ 88,271.59

Attachment 7:
WPP Addendum A for the
Blackhawk Private Property
Restoration Project

Addendum A: Private Property Restoration Along the Soque River

Prepared August 2026

Strategic focus: create voluntary, high-impact restoration projects on privately owned properties along the Soque River while supporting the people and businesses whose livelihoods depend on a healthy river.

Purpose and Strategic Focus

This addendum supplements Sections 5 and 6 of the Plan. During implementation, the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) and its partners will place added emphasis on identifying, developing, and implementing voluntary restoration projects on privately owned properties along the main stem of the Soque River. Initial attention will be directed to sites where unstable banks, inadequate riparian cover, runoff pathways, or habitat limitations provide a clear opportunity for measurable ecological lift. This focus recognizes that durable watershed progress depends on trusted relationships with the landowners who steward much of the river corridor.

A Mutually Beneficial Partnership Opportunity

Many landowners, fishing outfitters, guides, lodging operators, and other river-based businesses depend on the Soque River's water quality, aquatic habitat, scenic character, and recreational value. Proactive, one-on-one engagement can align watershed goals with property and business objectives. Projects should be designed to reduce sediment, bacteria, and nutrient delivery; improve riparian and aquatic habitat; protect banks and property improvements; and sustain recreation and river-dependent livelihoods. This partnership model can produce visible demonstration sites and build long-term stewardship throughout the watershed.

Eligible Restoration Practices	Implementation Commitments
Depending on site conditions, projects may include: ● bioengineered or natural-channel streambank stabilization; ● native riparian buffers, reforestation, and invasive-species control; ● livestock exclusion, stabilized crossings, and improved river access; ● runoff and stormwater practices that reduce erosion and pollutants; and ● in-stream or floodplain habitat work where appropriate and permitted.	SRWA and its partners will: ● conduct targeted outreach and voluntary site assessments; ● develop concepts, budgets, funding plans, and maintenance commitments with owners; ● pursue Section 319, NRCS, other grants, private funds, and matching support; ● use written agreements covering access, construction, maintenance, monitoring, and documentation; and ● report completed work and results through the Plan's adaptive-management process.

Site Selection and Accountability

Priority will be based on landowner willingness, expected pollutant reduction and habitat benefit, connection to impaired or high-priority reaches, feasibility, cost-effectiveness, maintenance, and demonstration value. Results will be tracked through restored stream length and riparian acreage, estimated load reductions, habitat indicators, and documented before-and-after conditions. Implementation will remain within the Plan's existing goals, funding framework, performance measures, and adaptive-management process.

Contractor Affidavit under O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(b)(1)

The undersigned contractor ("Contractor") executes this Affidavit to comply with O.C.G.A § 13-10-91 related to any contract to which Contractor is a party that is subject to O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91 and hereby verifies its compliance with O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91, attesting as follows:

- a) The Contractor has registered with, is authorized to use and uses the federal work authorization program commonly known as E-Verify, or any subsequent replacement program;
- b) The Contractor will continue to use the federal work authorization program throughout the contract period, including any renewal or extension thereof;
- c) The Contractor will notify the public employer in the event the Contractor ceases to utilize the federal work authorization program during the contract period, including renewals or extensions thereof;
- d) The Contractor understands that ceasing to utilize the federal work authorization program constitutes a material breach of Contract;
- e) The Contractor will contract for the performance of services in satisfaction of such contract only with subcontractors who present an affidavit to the Contractor with the information required by O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(a), (b), and (c);
- f) The Contractor acknowledges and agrees that this Affidavit shall be incorporated into any contract(s) subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91 for the project listed below to which Contractor is a party after the date hereof without further action or consent by Contractor; and
- g) Contractor acknowledges its responsibility to submit copies of any affidavits, drivers' licenses, and identification cards required pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91 to the public employer within five business days of receipt.

180048

Federal Work Authorization User Identification Number

01/14/2009

Date of Authorization

Habersham County Board of Commissioners

Name of Contractor

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Name of Public Employer

Implement 2026 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan – Black Hawk Fly-Fishing Mitigation Project

Name of Project

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on _____, _____, 20____ in _____ (city), _____ (state).

Signature of Authorized Officer or Agent

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Officer or Agent

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN BEFORE ME
ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____, 20____.

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: _____