Helping Communities
Put WaterFirst

Water Issues Facing GA

- Permitting limitations
  - TMDLs
  - Water Quantity
    - Metro District
    - 24 Coastal Counties
- New Regulations
  - Water Stewardship Bill
- Drought
- Flooding

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

- DCA promotes sustainability, environmental protection, and enhanced quality of life by encouraging local implementation of generally accepted best growth and development practices.
Community Planning Assistance

- Complete Check list
- Resource Teams
- Targeting area of need

WaterFirst
Committed to Caring for Our Water Resources

A Community Based Water Initiative
Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Water Resource Technical Assistance Program

- Three Tier Approach
- Community Planning Institute
- Community Assessment
- WaterFirst “Class”
- WaterFirst Designated Community
What is the WaterFirst Community Program?

- Voluntary partnership between local governments and state agencies working together to increase the quality of life in communities through the wise management and protection of water resources;
- Proactive approach to water resources connecting land use and water quality and quantity;
- Pursuing and rewarding environmental excellence beyond what is required by law;

What is the WaterFirst Community Program?

- Establishing a network of water professionals and leaders in the industry;
- Protecting valuable water resources for both environmental and economic benefits today and for future generations.

Why would a community want to participate in the WaterFirst Program?

- And it provides:
  - **Resources**: to help guide the integration of the management and protection of water resources into daily operations and comprehensive land use plans;
  - **Incentives**: participating in the WaterFirst program, and committing to the community’s goals for improved water quality, bring with it real economic benefits;
  - **Recognition**: WaterFirst designation will demonstrate a community’s commitment to environmental excellence.
Components of WaterFirst

- 1. Watershed Assessment
- 2. Stormwater Master Planning
- 3. Water Supply Planning
- 4. Water Supply Protection
- 5. Water Conservation
- 6. Wastewater Master Planning
- 7. Water Reclamation and Reuse

 Components of WaterFirst

I. Watershed Assessment

A comprehensive effort to determine the multiple causes of water quality and habitat degradation in a watershed.

Example: Watershed Assessment Forsyth - Gainesville - Hall
Components of WaterFirst

II. Stormwater Master Planning

In general, a program to manage the volume and flow rate of stormwater runoff so that it doesn’t damage constructed or natural systems. Once considered primarily for flood control, stormwater management is vital to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

GPS Stormwater Inventory

- Sub-meter accurate GPS location
- Structure type and size
- Damage
- Sedimentation
- Debris
- Vegetation
- Erosion
- Water quality
- Maintenance need
- Photo inventory
Components of WaterFirst

III. Water Supply Planning

An important management tool that promotes orderly, methodical development and wise investments while protecting an irreplaceable natural resource.

Example - Water Supply Planning
Regional Reservoirs
IV. Water Supply Protection

The fundamental idea is to protect water supplies from contaminants, rather than to rely on treatment processes to remove them. Additionally, it is managing potential sources of contaminants and engaging in contingency planning by determining alternate sources of drinking water.

Example - Water Supply Protection

Education
Components of WaterFirst

V. Water Conservation

Webster’s Dictionary defines conservation as a careful preservation and protection of something; especially: planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. It can also be defined as the efficient use of a resource. Conservation of water offers both economic and environmental benefits.

Are you in compliance with the Water Stewardship Act 2010?

Water Efficient Fixtures and Equipment

- Plumbing code was revised to meet new requirements by July 1, 2012.
- Require high efficiency cooling towers by July 1, 2012
Water Efficiency Landscaping and Irrigation

- DNR is to amend their outdoor water use for landscaping.
  - No watering between 10 AM – 4 PM.
  - Note: there can be variations in the rules depending on location and EPD approval. Red Zone has odd/even water restrictions.

Rain Water and Gray Water Use

- Amend the Georgia Plumbing Code, 2006 International Plumbing Code, to allow non-potable gray and rainwater to be used for toilets.
- 24 Coastal Communities require reuse lines for new development.
- Coastal Stormwater Supplement – storing water onsite.

Sub-metering

- All new multi units are to be sub-metered.
  - By property owner
  - Local government
  - Water provider
What Makes Up A Water Conservation Program?

- Educational Outreach Materials
- Water Conservation Devices
- Leak Detection Program
- Meter Replacement Program
- Enforcement of Water Restriction Ordinance
- Reuse/Rain Barrels
- Water Wise Landscaping
- Water Rates

Example - Water Conservation
Indoor and Outdoor Water Saver Kits

Water Meter Replacement Program – Garden City

- Water meters = 2880
- Water meter routes = 16
- 10% annual meter replacement
- 33% converted to radio read
- Annual large usage meter calibration
- Fill metering station
Components of WaterFirst

VI. Wastewater Master Planning

Reviewing the adequacy of existing wastewater collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal facilities and assessing potential changes for the future.

Example - Wastewater Master Planning
Developing an Overflow Response
Components of WaterFirst

Example - Water Reclamation and Reuse
Golf Course Irrigation VII. Water Reclamation and Reuse

- Reclaimed water is highly treated wastewater that can be used again safely for other purposes.

Benefits offered through the WaterFirst Program

- Participating Communities receive:
  - Resources, tools and support to help meet water management goals.
  - State-wide recognition for being environmental stewards.
  - Access to WaterFirst peer network and resources.
  - Invitation to special “issue retreats/workshops” addressing critical water stewardship issues.
  - Free attendance to any Community Planning Institute event.
Benefits offered through the WaterFirst Program

**Designation Benefits:**
- 1% interest rate reduction for Georgia Environmental Finance Authority water related loans.
- Annual eligibility for DCA Community Block Development Grants for water related projects.
- Priority for EPD 319 Grant funding.
- State-wide recognition, including road signage, and authorization to use the WaterFirst trademarked logo.

### DESIGNATED WATERFIRST COMMUNITIES

**Since 2003**
- Gwinnett County
- City of Savannah

**Since 2004**
- Columbus Consolidated Gov’t and Columbus Water Works
- City of Hartwell

**Since 2005**
- Cobb County
- Cobb/Marietta Water Authority
- City of Tybee Island

**Since 2006**
- Town of Braselton

**Since 2007**
- City of Griffin
- City of Rome
- Tifton/ Tift County

**Since 2008**
- Oconee County
- City of Gainesville
- Douglasville/Douglas County/WSA

**Since 2009**
- City of Winder
- City of Roswell

**Since 2010**
- Forsyth County
- City of Winder
- Henry County/Henry County Water & Sewerage Authority
- Covington
- City of Fayette
### Designated WaterFirst Communities

| Since 2011 | Garden City |
| Since 2012 | Loganville |

| Since 2012 | Newton County / Newton County W&S and all its municipalities |

| Since 2013 | City of Auburn |
| Since 2013 | Athens-Clarke County |

| Since 2014 | Fulton County |

### WaterFirst Class

- City of Americus
- City of Austell
- City of Canton
- City of Cartersville
- City of Clarkesville
- City of Dallas
- City of Darien
- City of Douglas
- City of Fairburn
- City of Glennville
- City of Jefferson
- City of McDonough
- City of Monroe
- City of Pooler
- City of Richmond Hill
- City of Rincon
- City of Valdosta
- City of Waycross
- City of Woodstock
- Floyd County
- Pickens County
- Walker County

### Applications Deadlines?

- Last workday in April and October.
- Application is to be submitted digitally and one hard copy.