



Waters for Georgia

## Georgia Power Foundation Grants 2020-2021 Cycle 1 Summary

In 2020, The Georgia Power Foundation, Inc. released an RFP and invested in 8 Water Grants designed to improve water quality and contribute to measurable benefits for environments and communities across the state of Georgia. Of the total awarded, 70% of funding was awarded to projects that may impact underserved communities.

Primary consideration was given to projects focused on waters of Georgia which were **listed as impaired** under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Through 2020-2021, projects began the task of conservation actions in support of delisting or down-listing the impaired waters or segments. This report includes highlights of the projects funded, including implementation outcomes for projects in progress and impacts for completed projects.



*Chattahoochee River in Atlanta*

# Project Highlights

## The Nature Conservancy

Replaced 2 culverts at Goldmine Branch

Opening Up  
**4.5**  
Miles of Stream

for wildlife & habitat improvement,  
increasing populations of fish and  
streambed species.

## ECO-Action

Collaborated with partners and  
stakeholders to complete the design  
activities and final cost estimate  
for building plans.

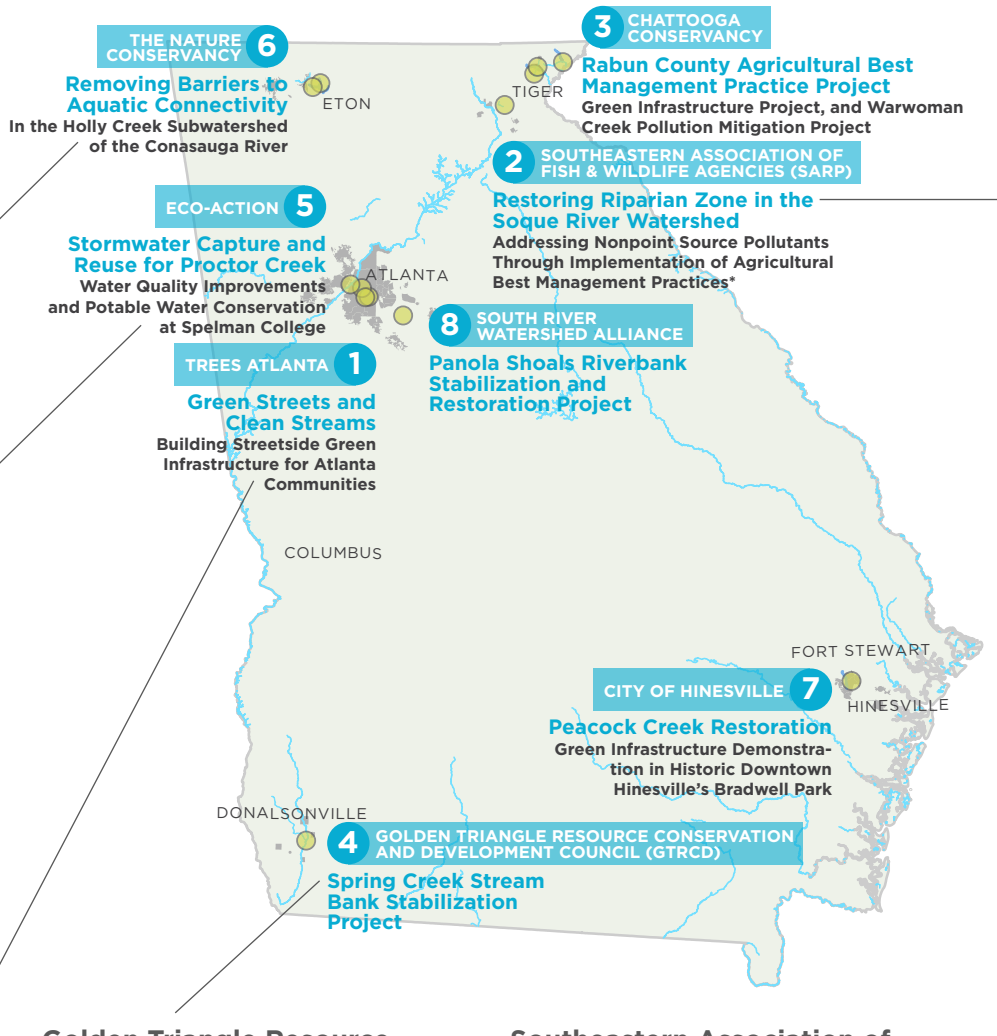
Secured  
**6**  
Stakeholder  
Agreements

to support development and  
implementation activities  
for the stormwater  
mitigation plan.

## Trees Atlanta

**12**  
Rain Gardens  
Installed

in Intrinchantment, Proctor Creek,  
and Utoy watersheds.



**Golden Triangle Resource  
Conservation and  
Development Council  
(GTRCD)**

Restored  
Approximately  
**300**  
Linear Feet of  
Streambank

at Spring Creek, the restoration has  
increased water quality and will  
protect critical habitat for federally  
listed mussel species.

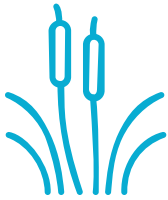
**Southeastern Association of  
Fish & Wildlife Agencies (SARP)**

Implemented best management practices  
(BMPs) on 80 Acres of Farmland

Protecting  
**14**  
Acres of  
Riparian Zones  
and 5 springs.



# Primary Environmental Actions & Activities



## Green Infrastructure

Improving community recreation sites, restoring, and enhancing streambeds, and constructing urban solutions including rain gardens to reduce urban rainwater runoff.



## Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Developing site specific, economically feasible practices applied by farmers and forestry managers to support agricultural production while accounting for environmental and public health impacts.



## Managing Water Quality

Supporting activities that improve water temperature, reduce toxins, and optimize PH levels to sustain wildlife. Impacts of managing water quality improvements are based on long term measurements, some projects may not see water quality improvement markers until one or more years after implementation.



## Community Engagement

Developing plans and implementing activities with and for a community to enhance knowledge of water conservation, and how to create community-driven solutions for future water benefits.



After Spring Creek stream bank restoration. Miller County, GA

## Effects of the Pandemic

All projects were scheduled to launch just as news of the global pandemic was shared nationally. Social distancing and business closures impacted project start and completion times. Additionally, some projects faced staffing challenges, planning delays, extended wait times for permits and collaboration requests. Despite those challenges, partner organizations were able to regroup and implement projects. Waters for Georgia provided critical funding for these projects during the early pandemic, and continues to support projects in completing their goals.

# Project Summary



Residential stormwater planter installed by Trees Atlanta.

**PROJECT PARTNER:** Trees Atlanta

**LOCATION:** Atlanta, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**  

**STATUS:** Original project scope complete. Through implementation efficiencies, project partners were able to add additional planters to the scope and budget – completion date extended to June 2022.

## 1 Green Streets and Clean Streams

### Building Streetside Green Infrastructure for Atlanta Communities

Trees Atlanta installed 12 rain gardens in residential neighborhoods across Atlanta. Trees Atlanta participated in virtual community meetings and found over 300 residents have expressed interest in the project.

- Trees Atlanta surveyed communities and designed and installed twelve stormwater tree planters in residential areas of Atlanta.
- The planters, a kind of green infrastructure, were designed to both enhance Atlanta's urban tree canopy and capture stormwater runoff from nearby roadways.
- Targeted waterways included Intrenchment Creek, Proctor Creek, and Utoy Creek.
- Monitoring equipment was installed at each planter to evaluate how well they manage stormwater runoff.
- The project provided an opportunity to demonstrate how a city-wide program could expand planter installations and improve stormwater management more broadly.



Soque River Improvements: riparian fence.

**PROJECT PARTNER:** Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (SARP)

**LOCATION:** Clarkesville, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**   

**STATUS:** In progress

## 2 Restoring Riparian Zone in the Soque River Watershed

### Addressing Nonpoint Source Pollutants Through Implementation of Agricultural Best Management Practices\*

SARP implemented BMPs on 80 acres of farmland, protecting 14 acres of riparian zone and 5 springs.

- The Soque River is the largest tributary of the Chattahoochee River upstream from Lake Lanier – the primary source of drinking water for the City of Atlanta.
- Poor water quality in Beaverdam Creek, a tributary of the Soque River, has impacted populations of aquatic insects and fish.
- Healthy streamside vegetation filters out harmful levels of pollutants such as nutrients and bacteria and improves water quality.
- SARP and its partners worked with farmers to build fences that keep livestock out of the creek and reduce damage to streamside vegetation and aquatic habitat.
- Fencing also protected springs that feed into the creek from livestock caused damage.
- Project activities are significantly under budget due to farmer and partner cost-saving measures. This savings has allowed SARP develop additional well sites beyond their original scope. These additions will be completed in June 2022.

\*Due to complications with COVID-19, SARP merged the Hillabatchee Creek project award into this project award for the Soque River.





*A partner meeting between Chattooga Conservancy and Forest Service Partners.*

**PROJECT PARTNER:** Chattooga Conservancy

**LOCATION:** Clayton, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**   

**STATUS:** In progress, project delayed due to COVID 19 pandemic, estimated completion September 2022.

### 3 Rabun County Agricultural Best Management Practice Project

**Green Infrastructure Project, and Warwoman Creek Pollution Mitigation Project**

Chattooga Conservancy & Forest Service partners are working with the Rabun County Manager to produce the county's first draft of a collaborative Warwoman Creek Pollution Mitigation Plan in March 2022.

- Project partners supported best management practices on streamside farms, renovated a green infrastructure project on Stekoa Creek, and created a plan to reduce sediment and bacteria from entering Warwoman Creek.
- Green infrastructure renovation will improve the quality of stormwater entering Stekoa Creek by removing pavement within 50-feet of a 2.6 mile stretch of the stream and installing rain gardens, tree islands, and areas of permeable pavement.
- A plan to reduce fecal coliform bacteria and sediment from entering Warwoman Creek will be informed by a survey and be completed in cooperation with Rabun County and the US Forest Service.
- The Chattooga Conservancy also installed a public education kiosk to describe agricultural best management practices and how they help reduce pollution.



*Spring Creek prior to restoration.*

**PROJECT PARTNER:** Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council (GTRCD)

**LOCATION:** Boykin, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**  

**STATUS:** Complete

### 4 Spring Creek Stream Bank Stabilization Project

GTRCD restored approximately 300 linear feet of stream bank, exceeding their goal by 100 linear feet. Water quality measures have improved and are now within acceptable ranges per the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

- Two federally protected mussel species, the shiny-rayed pocket book and the oval pigtoe, live in the Spring Creek watershed; habitat loss and other factors have put these species in peril.
- Project partners supported stream bank stability improvements, streamside vegetation and turbid barrier installation, and other protections to reduce erosion and prevent excessive sediment from entering the stream.
- Restoration actions will improve water quality and protect critical habitat for the imperiled mussel populations.



**PROJECT PARTNER:** ECO-Action

**LOCATION:** Atlanta, Georgia

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**  

**STATUS:** Complete

## 5 Stormwater Capture and Reuse for Proctor Creek

### Water Quality Improvements and Potable Water Conservation at Spelman College

ECO-Action completed design activities and final cost estimates for stormwater mitigation planned on the Spelman College campus. ECO-Action has also engaged government agencies, corporate and foundation funders to build the project.

- ECO-Action and its partners are collaboratively moving a stormwater mitigation plan on the Spelman College campus forward.
- The plan aims to reduce flooding with combined sewage in underserved Proctor Creek communities.
- Project partners completed engineering designs and final cost estimates for green infrastructure projects at Spelman College and the surrounding community.
- The projects will collect stormwater from one of five high-elevation subwatersheds that are the main source of runoff and increase stormwater capture seven-times greater than current Atlanta requirements.



**PROJECT PARTNER:** The Nature Conservancy

**LOCATION:** Chatsworth, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**  

**STATUS:** Complete

## 6 Removing Barriers to Aquatic Connectivity

### In the Holly Creek Subwatershed of the Conasauga River

The Nature Conservancy opened 4.5 miles of streambed with 2 culverts that allow for aquatic organism passage. The long term effects of culvert replacement at Goldmine Branch will result in habitat improvement.

- The Upper Coosa River basin is a water source for Atlanta's northern suburbs and an outdoor paradise for recreation and fishing.
- The headwaters of Holly Creek are in the Chattahoochee National Forest and are heavily utilized by the local community and recreationists across Georgia and the region.
- Altered water quality, incompatible agricultural practices, and barriers to aquatic connectivity pose the greatest threats to fish and mussel species.
- The Nature Conservancy replaced 2 culverts that were blocking fish passage, allowing them to expand their range in the watershed. Improved stream crossings also reduced erosion and sediment inputs.



Bradwell Park illustrative plan.

**PROJECT PARTNER:** City of Hinesville

**LOCATION:** Hinesville, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**   

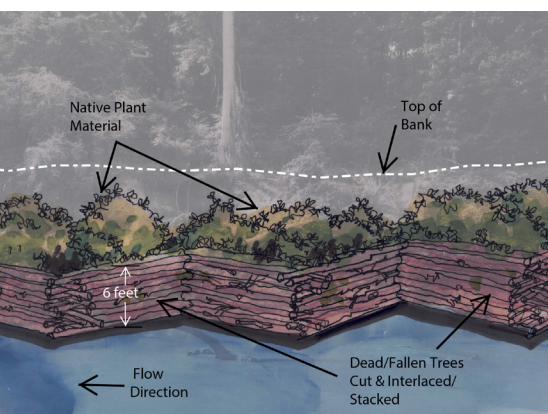
**STATUS:** In progress, project delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic, estimated completion date is June 2022

## 7 Peacock Creek Restoration

### Green Infrastructure Demonstration in Historic Downtown Hinesville's Bradwell Park

The design and planning phase of the project have been achieved. The project is currently being advertised for bid and is on track for the new completion date.

- In 2020, the City of Hinesville finalized plans to redevelop the historic downtown Bradwell Park, which included green infrastructure elements.
- Nonpoint source pollution and urban stormwater discharges have caused reductions in dissolved oxygen levels in Peacock Creek.
- Project partners installed pervious pavers, 4 rain gardens, and bioswales to promote infiltration of up to 90% of stormwater from the park and surrounding roadways.
- The reduction of stormwater runoff entering Peacock Creek will improve water quality conditions.
- The project is also intended to incentivize nature-based water quality improvement actions around the watershed.



**PROJECT PARTNER:** South River Watershed Alliance

**LOCATION:** Stonecrest, GA

**PRIMARY ACTIONS:**   

**STATUS:** In progress, project delayed due to COVI 19 pandemic, estimated completion date June 2022.

## 8 Panola Shoals Riverbank Stabilization and Restoration Project

South River Watershed Alliance will complete construction of shoreline restoration above the projected 300 linear feet to 450 linear feet. The design and procurement of permits have been achieved. The project is on track for the extended completion date.

- The banks of the South River at Panola Shoals are subjected to intense scouring from fast moving water that comes with each heavy rain event.
- Scouring erodes soil, undercuts trees, and uproots vegetation leading to sediment buildup along its reaches.
- Project partners completed the design and development of a natural channel approach to restore the impacted riverbank.
- The design complements the most beautiful, scenic, and heavily visited location on the river, and gateway to the South River Water Trail.
- A stabilized area of streambank vegetation and floodplain will reduce the speed of stormwater runoff and promote the removal of sediment and other pollution.
- Longer-term improvements will include improved water quality, fish and aquatic insect habitat, and benefits for the community.



Waters for Georgia



**Waters for Georgia**  
is a grant program of the  
**Georgia Power Foundation**  
with **BEF** as the program  
administrative partner.

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For more info about the application and website please go to:  
<https://www.georgiapower.com/grants.html>

For more info about the Waters for Georgia Program, please contact:  
[rwarren@b-e-f.org](mailto:rwarren@b-e-f.org)