



Waters for Georgia

Georgia Power Foundation Grants 2022-2023 Cycle 2 Summary

In 2022, the Georgia Power Foundation, Inc. carried out a second cycle of the Waters for Georgia Grants Program. After a request for proposal and selection process, 10 Water Grants were awarded. The projects range in type, including agricultural best management practices, riparian habitat rehabilitation, green infrastructure, pollution monitoring, and mitigation in streams, all designed to contribute water benefits for environments and communities across the state of Georgia. Each of the projects that were selected directly contribute to water quality and increase access to green spaces for socioeconomically diverse 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 2022-2023, project sponsors began the task of implementing conservation actions. This report includes highlights of the supported projects, including implementation results for projects that are still in progress and outcomes for the completed projects.



Piedmont Park in Atlanta.

Project Highlights

South Fork Conservancy

The rain gardens at Peachtree Creek

Filter
700k
Gallons

of urban runoff per year.

The Conservation Fund

10
Acres

will be transformed into a public park within the Hunter Hills community.

Trees Atlanta

22
Rain Gardens Installed

at 11 residential locations within Fulton county.



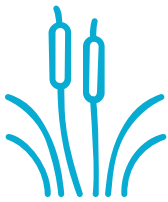
Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (FRSWCD)

Smart irrigation techniques on 776 acres of land will create a

Water Savings of
42.49
Million Gallons

per year.

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 aquatic biodiversity. 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.



Before - This residential driveway would flood in a storm.



After - Trees Atlanta installed this rain garden to capture and filter stormwater.

Project Summary



Half Fast Farms staff in front of a center pivot they retrofitted to improve its efficiency.

PROJECT PARTNER: Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (FRSWCD)

LOCATION: Miller, Seminole and Decatur Counties

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

1 Restoration of Spring Creek through Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)

FRSWCD implemented an outreach campaign to spread awareness of water savings techniques to farming communities in the Spring Creek watershed. Water savings techniques have been deployed on 776 acres, creating a projected water savings of 42.49 million gallons per year.

- FRSWCD completed targeted outreach to 100 producers in the area on smart irrigation practices and partnered with 4 landowners to implement water smart irrigation technologies.
- Partnered with University of Georgia Cooperative Extension service to highlight a new Smart Irrigation App. Giving farmers a tool to make informed irrigation decisions based on soil type, evapotranspiration, age of the orchard, and real time weather data.
- Developed a FRSWCD Water Savings Manual and tracking tool to track and quantify improved agricultural irrigation water efficiency following BMP implementation.



Trash trap install and in use at Meadow Loop Trail.

PROJECT PARTNER: South Fork Conservancy

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

2 Rain Gardens at South and North Forks of Peachtree Creek

South Fork Conservancy collaborated with state and county officials, community leaders, and volunteers to create two new riverbed-themed community gardens along the Confluence Nature Trail (South Fork) and on the Meadow Loop Nature Trail (North Fork).

- Developed a trash trap at the Meadow Loop garden, capturing dozens of pounds of litter with every rain shower. This trash would normally flow directly into the creek.
- The gardens provide an oasis for local residents to enjoy the outdoors. Around 63% of residents within easy walking distance of the gardens identify as BIPOC.
- The rain gardens filter and prevent 700,000 gallons of runoff per year from rushing into the creeks from two large culverts.



PROJECT PARTNER: South Fork Conservancy

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

3 Runoff Mitigation at Nicklebottom Community Garden

South Fork Conservancy developed an innovative water catchment system collecting water from rooftops of a neighboring business community to sustain the Nicklebottom Community Gardens.

- The rain gardens allow stormwater from impervious surfaces, such as streets and driveways, to soak into the ground, and catchment system prevents at least 70,000 gallons of water runoff from entering Peachtree Creek each year.
- Mitigating runoff also prevents flooding over parking lots and yards that may carry pollutants such as fecal coliform bacteria to Peachtree Creek.
- Nicklebottom Community Gardens are exclusively watered using the runoff system, wildflower beds, and blueberry borders are all watered using rainwater.



PROJECT PARTNER: Flint Riverkeeper

LOCATION: Manchester, GA

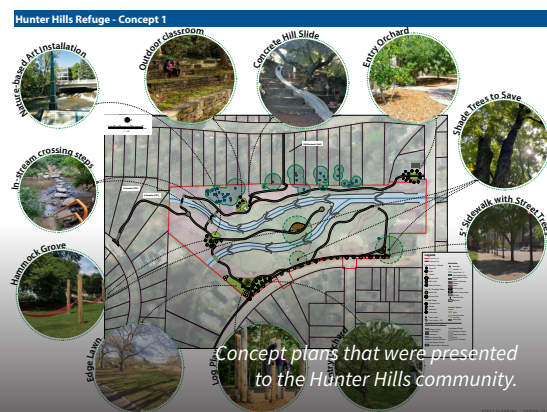
PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

4 Development of De-Listing Plan for Pigeon Creek

Pigeon Creek is a popular area for swimming and shoal bass fishing. Before the project there was not enough data to understand what pollutants pose hazards for recreational users. Flint Riverkeeper deployed water quality monitoring to uncover sources of pollutants and is working with local municipalities to address source mitigation.

- Flint Riverkeeper staff scouted the length of Pigeon Creek with digital mapping software on the ground, and waterborne sampling of six sights at six periods of time over 1 year.
- Sampling along Pigeon Creek showed that human-sourced *E. coli* dominate contamination, with dog and poultry as secondary contributors to the pollution load.
- Project findings provide enough information to develop next steps towards de-listing the stream through working to improve the City of Manchester's sewage systems, and local septic tanks, some of the possible sources of contamination.



PROJECT PARTNER: The Conservation Fund

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: In progress

5 Building a Park with Purpose: Restoring Proctor Creek, Reducing Urban Flooding, and Uplifting Equitable Community-Driven Outcomes in the Hunter Hills Neighborhood

The Conservation Fund secured ten acres in northwest Atlanta, and in partnership with Atlanta Department of Watershed Management (ADWM), they are restoring the natural flow to a section of Proctor Creek through green infrastructure.

- The green infrastructure will treat 5 million gallons of stormwater during heavy rain events, reducing flooding, improving water quality, and limiting downstream erosion and property damage.
- Community members representing the Historic Hunter Hills Neighborhood Association participated in the Parks with Purpose Peer Exchange in October 2023.
- The Conservation Fund is currently working to get additional input from ADWM before finalizing the design into a single concept plan that will be presented to the community in Spring 2024.



Phinzy Center staff conducting water sampling.

PROJECT PARTNER: Phinzy Center for Water Sciences

LOCATION: Wrens, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS: 

STATUS: Complete

6 Pollution Monitoring and Microbial Source Tracking of Brushy Creek

Streams along the Brushy Creek watershed are deemed unfit for fishing & recreation by Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD). The Phinzy Center for Water Sciences conducted pollution source tracking and monitoring to better understand the causes.

- Deployed microbial source tracking (MST), a tool used to characterize the source of microbial contamination in water and monitored the fecal coliform levels at 7 sites.
- Results from testing uncovered that BMPs were not effective in lowering pollution loads in streams, pointing to sewage infrastructure as a source of pollutants.
- The Phinzy Center plans to collaborate with Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) in solutions for delisting streams within Brushy Creek.



PROJECT PARTNER: Trees Atlanta

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

7 Green Streets and Clean Streams Phase II — Building Citywide Green Infrastructure Program for Atlanta Communities

Trees Atlanta designed and installed 22 stormwater tree planters (rain gardens) at 11 distinct residential locations in Fulton County targeting Proctor Creek and Utoy Creek watersheds.

- Trees Atlanta refined the model of green infrastructure that was delivered with the first Waters for Georgia grant, with the goal of replicating the model through larger public conservation assistance programs.
- Developed a matching partnership with Georgia Association of Conservation Districts, to add an additional 10 rain gardens in Fulton County.
- During a two-year maintenance period, the health of installations will be monitored through ArcGIS and homeowner surveys, allowing for assessment of how well plants thrive.



PROJECT PARTNER: Trees Atlanta

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

8 Forests for Cleaner Streams and Thriving Communities

Trees Atlanta completed one year of a three-year initiative to improve forest health within 10.5 acres along the Proctor Creek Greenway trail, with the goal of improving water quality in the creek by mitigating flows and detaining and filtering urban runoff.

- In total, Trees Atlanta staff and volunteers completed 38.1 acres of removal work when adding up the various layers of overlapping invasive species removal and multiple removal actions.
- Following the invasive species removal, 150 native trees were replanted to restore forest diversity.
- Trees Atlanta attended neighborhood association meetings, to educate the community about the project and trained 356 volunteers on invasive species removal techniques as well as tree planting, care, and maintenance.



Girls Who Code enjoying an afterschool meeting.

PROJECT PARTNER: Amana Academy

LOCATION: Alpharetta, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

9 Bioswale & Rain Garden at Amana Academy

Amana Academy, a school serving a diverse socioeconomic population, created a bioswale in the main parking lot of the school. It collects stormwater runoff and mitigates flooding in the pick up and drop off area. The 3,600 square foot bioswale also provides access to hands-on STEM learning for students, incorporating lessons with the rain gardens as an outdoor learning space.

- K-5 classes use the bioswale as an outdoor classroom, learning concepts in STEM, ecology, and weather.
- The Girls Who Code afterschool club hosts meetings on the bioswale, using it for unplugging from technology and enjoying nature.
- The school is working on plans with the City of Alpharetta to add a catchment pond adjacent to the bioswale.



Roadside enhancements to a runoff abatement ditch.

PROJECT PARTNER: Golden Triangle Resource Conservation & Development

LOCATION: Early County, GA

PRIMARY ACTIONS:  

STATUS: Complete

10 Sawhatchee Creek-Early County — Sedimentation Abatement and Riparian Repair

Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council along with US Fish and Wildlife Service began the restoration of a 1-mile segment of road/stream intersection along Sawhatchee creek.

- GTRCD completed riparian restoration by planting native shrubs for bank stabilization and completing roadbed ditch enhancements to address stormwater runoff.
- A special 5-year maintenance agreement with Early County has been executed for the upkeep of the road/stream intersection.
- GTRCD and USFW partnered with local landowners to implement BMPs in nearby fields to address runoff and prevent agricultural chemicals from entering the stream.
- This project will improve water quality for federally listed mussel species, the Shiny-Rayed Pocket Book (*Lampsilis subangulata*), along with the Oval Pigtoe (*Pleurobema pyriforme*).



Waters for Georgia



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

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:

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