



SPOTLIGHT ON WATER RECREATION



SPRING / SUMMER 2022

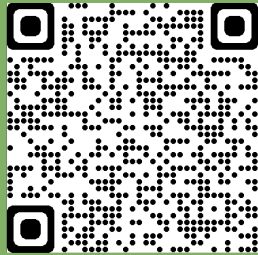
THE RESOURCE

UNDERSTANDING OUR WATER



Forsyth County offers a lot of opportunities for water recreation, such as the entry point at Eagles Beak Park that is part of the Etowah River Trail. Good water quality in our rivers and streams supports all kinds of activities that help residents enjoy the great outdoors while knowing the water is healthy for them and anything living in it. So grab your kayak or canoe or tube or just wade in the water and enjoy!

We're also fortunate to have a number of state designated trout streams. Just be sure you have the appropriate fishing license and trout stamp.



Scan for information on trout stamps and other licensing required by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

MAKING SURE THE WATER IS JUST RIGHT

Warmer weather and longer days may send you running to the nearest body of water to keep cool while relaxing and enjoying nature. Forsyth County features an abundance of water resources – from Lake Lanier and some of its tributaries such as Six Mile Creek, Bald Ridge Creek, and Young Deer Creek to the miles of creeks and streams crisscrossing the county to the Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers. From agriculture to recreation to

water supply, we expect a lot from these resources! That's why the County invests in efforts to ensure that we're maintaining and even improving water quality through local permitting requirements, stormwater management, water quality monitoring, special projects, and more.



This supports healthy habitats for fish, aquatic life, and wildlife living around county waterways. Good water quality also means that we humans can play, splash, wade, swim, kayak, fish and more on our local waterways and know that the water is just right for all kinds of uses, including recreation.



The Department of Engineering publishes *The Resource* on a regular basis to build community knowledge and understanding of our shared water resources.

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In this Issue...

- » *Get Schooled on Fish Counts and Water Quality*
- » *Spotlight on Water Recreation*

GET SCHOOLED ON FISH COUNTS & WATER QUALITY

“A bad day fishing is better than a good day at work!” according to one popular saying on the subject. Whether you use the latest gear or a bamboo pole, you want to be sure whatever you catch is healthy. Healthy fish need a healthy environment to thrive. That means good water quality in local water ways is critical. And the fish have a tale to tell.

For more than 20 years, the County has been working diligently on protecting and improving water resources through its Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) and the Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP). These plans help the County meet State requirements for watershed protection and include activities such as, assessing stream conditions, identifying pollution sources, evaluating water quality improvement and protection options, and engaging in community outreach and education.



Animals living in local waterways actually provide key data points that help determine water quality. Every other Fall, scientists wade through streams for a “fish count” to better understand the types and number of fish species living there and if they have changed. They catch and release at several stations situated in creeks

and streams across the county to see which species are present and then compare numbers to previous years’ counts. More types of fish equal healthy waterways!

A couple of species found in Forsyth and throughout Georgia watersheds



Yellow Bullhead



Redbreast Sunfish

In 2021, the team completed counts or “fish health scores” at 10 stations along local creeks and streams including a new one on Brewton Creek. The sample area is 35 times longer than the water body’s width.

Species only found in a few Georgia watersheds and in Forsyth



Alabama Shiner



Southern Studfish



Bronze Darter



Mobile Logperch

They determined that even with continued development in Forsyth County, fish health scores remain the same or have increased slightly. Additionally, during dry weather, bacteria levels at stations along the Etowah and Chattahoochee Rivers are within safe parameters set by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).