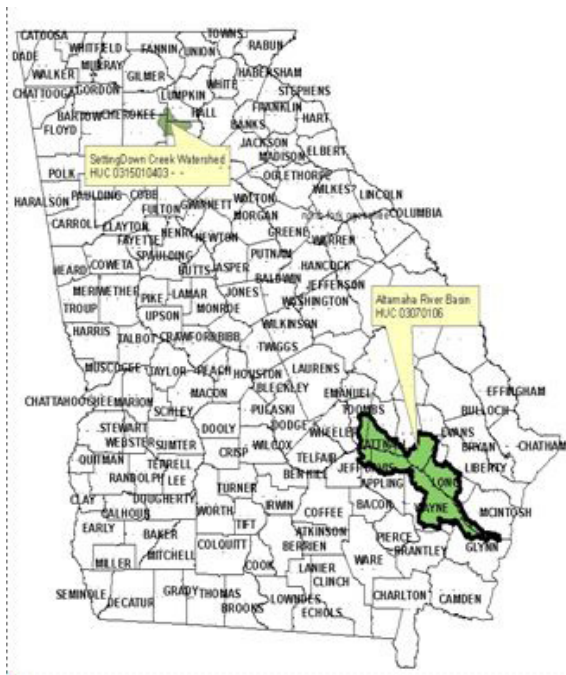


## Improving Water Quality in Georgia

With one project completed and two more underway, GSWCC and Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been focusing on improving water quality for citizens in Georgia with the voluntary cooperation of agricultural producers in the state.

Water flowing through Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, and Pickens counties is cleaner following a recently completed \$700,000 water quality program for the Middle Coosawatee River conducted by the Limestone Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and the Coosa River Soil and Water Conservation District. With funding provided by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission staff contracted with agricultural producers to install conservation practices that have reduced nitrogen entering the Middle Coosawatee River by an estimated 63 percent, reduced phosphorus by an estimated 80 percent, and reduced sediment by an estimated 57 percent. “By sharing the cost of installing conservation practices with landowners, we were able to make measurable improvements to Talking Rock Creek, Little Scarecorn Creek, Salacoa Creek, and Lick Creek,” explained Brent Dykes, executive director of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.



Having completed the Middle Coosawatee River project, two new voluntary Multi-Phased Nutrient Planning Management Initiatives for poultry and livestock operations have begun in northern and southeastern Georgia.

The Settingdown Creek Watershed Project lies primarily within the boundaries of the Upper Chattahoochee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Forsyth and Dawson counties) but also runs through a portion of the Limestone Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (Cherokee and Pickens counties).

The Altamaha River Basin travels through the Altamaha Soil and Water Conservation District (Appling and Jeff Davis counties), Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District (Long and McIntosh counties), Ogeechee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Tattall County), Ohoospee River Soil and Water Conservation District (Montgomery and Toombs counties), and Satilla River Soil and Water Conservation District (Glynn and Wayne counties).

Farmers participating in these projects will receive a free on-farm assessment, soil testing, an updated Nutrient Management Plan, and an incentive payment for participation in the program. GSWCC will assist in identifying potential funding sources to complete improvements based on the farm assessment. There is no cost to farmers for this service.

Farmers wishing to take advantage of this free service to update their plans should contact GSWCC Region offices to set up a time to complete an on-farm assessment. Agricultural producers in Cherokee, Dawson, Forsyth, and Pickens counties may contact Jessica Bee in the GSWCC Region I office in Calhoun by calling 706-624-1434 or emailing [jbee@gaswcc.org](mailto:jbee@gaswcc.org). Producers in Appling, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Tattall, Toombs, and Wayne counties may contact the GSWCC Region III office in Statesboro by calling 912-681-5241 or emailing [region3@gaswcc.org](mailto:region3@gaswcc.org). The GSWCC has produced a free manual, [Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture](http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture), listing agricultural water quality improvements, which is available online at <http://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture>.