



Georgia Water Coalition names 2013 “Dirty Dozen” 12 of the worst offenses to Georgia’s water

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Individual contacts for each item listed in the Dirty Dozen report are available at:

www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 11-13-13 – Today, Georgia’s leading water protection group named its “Dirty Dozen” for 2013, highlighting 12 of the worst offenses to Georgia’s waters. The annual Dirty Dozen report shines a spotlight on state policies and failures that ultimately harm Georgia property owners, downstream communities, fish and wildlife, hunters and anglers, and boaters and swimmers.

“The Dirty Dozen is not a list of the most polluted water bodies in Georgia, nor are they ranked in any particular order,” said Joe Cook, Riverkeeper and Executive Director at the Coosa River Basin Initiative. “It’s a list of problems that exemplify the results of inadequate funding for environmental protections, lack of political will to enforce environmental laws and ultimately misguided water planning and spending priorities that flow from the very top of Georgia’s leadership.”

The Coalition’s full report details the history of each site and provides solutions to correct these ongoing problems and eliminate the listed threats. It is available online at:

<http://www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm>.

“Over the past decade, the health of Georgia’s waterways and the health and safety of Georgia citizens has been compromised as funding for Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division has not kept pace with population and economic growth,” said Gordon Rogers, the Flint Riverkeeper.

The problems highlighted in the report include:

- Stormwater from industrial facilities polluting a stream flowing into our state’s most important lake (Item 5) largely because there are only two EPD staffers responsible for inspecting and monitoring more than 2,000 industrial sites.
- Aging dams in danger of failing are going without inspection (Item 9); these ticking time bombs threaten life, property and the health of our rivers.
- The priorities of giant corporations are more important than the rights of citizens to fish, swim and boat in clean water (Item 4). While pulp fiber product giant Rayonier enjoyed profits of \$411 million in 2012, its paper plant in Jesup continued to foul the Altamaha, as it has done since the 1950s.
- Governor Nathan Deal’s administration continues a pattern of misguided funding priorities that invariably benefit the administration’s political cronies. While EPD’s budget is starved, creating multiple negative impacts on Georgia’s citizens, Governor Deal has directed more than \$160 million

during the past two years to expensive, unnecessary and environmentally damaging dam and reservoir projects (Item 2). These projects serve only to prolong Georgia's ongoing water conflicts with Alabama and Florida.

"In comparison, funding for the most cost-effective alternatives for growing the state's water supply—water conservation and efficiency measures—has languished," said Sally Bethea, the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. "During the past seven years, the state has spent an average of \$11 million annually to aid local communities in using their water more effectively—about six percent of what the Deal Administration has spent on high-cost, high-risk, speculative water supply projects in just two years."

"The Georgia Water Coalition publishes this annual list as a call to action for our state's leaders and its citizens to come together to correct pollution problems, eliminate the wasteful use of our state and local tax dollars and restore our streams, rivers, lakes and coastal wetlands," said April Ingle, Executive Director of Georgia River Network.

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The Georgia Water Coalition is a consortium of more than 200 conservation and environmental organizations, hunting and fishing groups, businesses, and faith-based organizations that have been working to protect Georgia's water since 2002. Collectively, these organizations represent more than 300,000 Georgians.

2013 Dirty Dozen

1. Floridan Aquifer: Water Injection Schemes Gamble with South Georgia's Pristine Underground "Lake"
2. Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers: Governor's Water Supply Program Wastes Tax Dollars & Incites More Water Conflicts with Neighbors
3. Flint River: Pumps, Dams, Diversions & State Water Policy Create Man-Made Drought
4. Altamaha River: Pulp Mill in Jesup Continues to Foul Georgia's Largest River
5. Flat Creek: Polluted Runoff in Chicken Capital Sends Bacteria to Stream Feeding Lake Lanier
6. Ocmulgee River: Coal Ash Threatens Waterways and Communities In the Home of Fried Green Tomatoes
7. Satilla River: Toxic Legacy in Waycross Needs Further Investigations, Cleanups
8. Savannah River: Massive Water Withdrawals for Nuclear, Coal-Fired Power Plants Threaten River's Health, Drinking Water
9. Lake Alice: Dam Breach Disaster in Cumming Highlights Need for Better Dam Safety
10. Georgia Coast: Proposed Changes to Coastline Laws Roll Back Long-Standing Protections
11. Hurricane Creek: Illegal Playground for Off-Road Vehicles Sends Mountains of Sediment to Trout Stream
12. Oconee and Ogeechee Rivers: Dirty Coal-Fired Power Plant to Spew Mercury and Deplete South Georgia Rivers