

WaterFirst Checklist

Please indicate date completed or start date for program elements. For questions about the WaterFirst checklist, please email waterresources@gefa.ga.gov and vthom@gefa.ga.gov.

	Date Completed	In Progress (Start Date)	Not Applicable	Write a short explanation of what has been completed. Please attach a copy of any referenced ordinances or documents.
Watershed Assessment				
Evaluate existing stream conditions and threats to water quality.	2001			We have an intergovernmental agreement for the City of Gainesville to do stream walks throughout Hall County and assess the potential threats to the stream.
Identify watershed boundaries and organizations currently working within the watershed to improve and protect water resources.	Ongoing			Stormwater Hotline for citizens to report problems.
Implement a water quality monitoring program to include biological integrity and chemical and physical measures.	2024			The City of Gainesville does monitor over 78 sampling sites as well as 92 visual inspections throughout Hall County.
Determine areas where protection is critical as important wildlife habitat.	2001			We have an intergovernmental agreement for the City of Gainesville to do stream walks throughout Hall County and assess the wildlife habitat.
Adopt stream corridor protection and buffer requirements.	2007			Hall County has a stream buffer ordinance that adds 25 foot undisturbed and 25 foot non-impervious to the state buffer of 25 feet. We also have a watershed protection ordinance that doubles these buffers in sensitive areas.
Implement and enforce an effective sedimentation and erosion control program.	2016			Hall County has had an effective erosion and sedimentation control program for many years. We adopted the model ordinance from Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission as they are provided to ensure our program is following the most updated guidance to protect our local water resources. Hall County's code enforcement and building inspectors enforce this program daily.
Require incorporation of water quality improvement measures in stormwater best management practices.	2001			We have had a stormwater ordinance that requires water quality BMP's since 2001. This ordinance is updated as required by MNGWPD.
Coordinate land use planning and zoning to promote water quality protection.	2007			Hall County has a conservation subdivision ordinance that clusters development and permits flexibility of design. Stormwater design and compliance is part of the plan review process coordinated by the planning and zoning department to meet requirements of MNGWPD. Code enforcement and building inspections enforces stormwater ordinances and public education is promoted through Adopt-A-Stream agreements, Etowah education program and a utility bill insert.
Adopt an open space preservation program.	2007			Hall County adopted a green space protection program on 11/22/2001. Hall County has adopted a conservation subdivision ordinance that clusters development and permits flexibility of design to minimize impervious and promote open space.
Adopt the Part 5 Environmental Criteria.	2001			Hall County has adopted Code Chapter 17.225 - "Protected water supply watershed, protected groundwater recharge area, and wetlands protection overlay zoning districts" which meets the part 5 environmental criteria. The protected water supply watershed ordinance doubles the width of the stream buffers within 7 miles upstream of the North Oconee River water intake.
Establish parking lot/road width standards to minimize impervious surfaces.	2017			Hall County has a conservation subdivision ordinance that clusters development and permits flexibility of design to minimize impervious and promote open space.
Stormwater Master Planning				
Comply with state and federal regulations for stormwater permitting.	2007			Hall County is currently in compliance with annual reports to EPD as well as audits with Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.
Establish a stormwater maintenance program or stormwater authority to manage stormwater program.	2007			Hall County maintains all accepted dry detention ponds from subdivisions. We inspect all residential and commercial stormwater BMP's since 2001 every year and ensure they are working properly. Our development review process ensures that new BMPS are as built certified and added to our inventory.
Evaluate existing stormwater/drainage systems to identify problem areas.	2001			Hall County maintains all accepted dry detention ponds from subdivisions. We inspect all residential and commercial stormwater BMP's since 2001 every year and ensure they are working properly. Our development review process ensures that new BMPS are as built certified and added to our inventory.
Exceed minimum measures required in Phase I or Phase II stormwater programs (Communities that do not fall under either phase should begin integrating the minimum measures).	2001			Hall County maintains all accepted dry detention ponds from subdivisions. We inspect all residential and commercial stormwater BMP's since 2001 every year and ensure they are working properly. Our development review process ensures that new BMPS are as built certified and added to our inventory.

Retrofit and upgrade stormwater and drainage systems to prevent erosion.	2001			We inspect 20% of all our stormwater drainage systems per year and try to fix all the pipes that are not working properly. We spend \$300,000 per year typically on culvert repair and replacement projects. In addition we collect \$35 per resident and dedicate this money toward stormwater infrastructure repairs and upgrades.
Adopt land use and zoning ordinances to minimize impervious area.	2007			Hall County has adopted a Greenspace Program and a conservation subdivision ordinance that allows cluster development and permits flexibility of design to minimize impervious area in new development.
Use vegetative controls when appropriate for stormwater control instead of traditional structural measures.	2007			The conservation subdivision ordinance provides the preservation of green space as a non-structural stormwater runoff and watershed protection measure. Georgia Stormwater Management Manual and associated Water Quality Tool promotes the use of stormwater treatment with the vegetative controls through a system of credits.
Use engineered soils and landscape systems to offset impervious surfaces.	2007			Hall County uses the conservation subdivision ordinance as well as the most recent Georgia Stormwater Management Manual.
Treat stormwater on-site through innovative design.	2007			Georgia Stormwater Management Manual and associated Water Quality Tool promotes the use of stormwater treatment with the vegetative controls through a system of credits.
Adopt and enforce construction sedimentation and erosion control ordinances to limit construction site runoff.	2016			We adopted the model ordinance from Metropolitan Georgia Water Planning District and Soil Water Conservation Commission they provided to ensure our program is following the most updated guidance to protect our local water resources.
Update local flood insurance maps.	2018			We actively work with FEMA and Georgia EPD to coordinate and adopt all current map updates. Current FIRM map dates are April 2018 and December 2022.
Preserve and protect flood-prone lands and sensitive areas through a greenspace program.	2007			Hall County adopted a Greenspace Program to protect waterways and stream corridors. Also, the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance was passed to preserve in perpetuity unique or sensitive natural resources such as groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, streams, etc.
Adopt ordinances to address litter control and illicit discharge and detection.	2006			Hall County has both the Litter Control and Illicit Discharge and Detection Ordinance modeled from MNGWPD. Hall County installed a Bandalong Litter Trap on Flat Creek for the City of Gainesville, and this project was awarded the APWA 2016 Technical Innovation award.
Adopt land use ordinances that protect and preserve floodplain functions.	2000			Floodplain management/flood damage prevention ordinance protects and preserves floodplain functions. To gain a better FEMA flood insurance rating, Hall County performed a future flood conditions flood study and adopted an ordinance for protection of this flood zone. 11/22/2000.
Water Supply Planning				
Identify future water supply needs based on population projections and water use trends. Identify conservation measures to reduce water use.	2002			Hall County does not have a public water system and reservoir is on hold. Utilize reuse to lower irrigation. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst
Evaluate the existing water supply infrastructure.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst this is one of their components of their water system master plan.
Conduct a water supply needs analysis.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst - This was completed during the last drought. Gainesville evaluated all surface water and ground water sources within Hall County. Gainesville evaluated the quality, quaint and relative cost of each option. Gainesville also is constantly evaluating our demand present and projected.
Develop a water supply master plan.	2000			Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst. Gainesville has a current project that addresses the long term condition and future of the drinking water state.
Develop a capital improvements plan (CIP) for water supply infrastructure.	Ongoing			Hall County conducts an annual CIP workshop. Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst. The City of Gainesville conducts an annual CIP Workshop.
Water Supply Protection				
Evaluate surface and groundwater protection alternatives.				Hall County did a source water assessment plan (SWAP) that evaluates Cedar Creek Reservoir and North Oconee River. Additionally, Hall County has a protected water supply watershed, protected groundwater recharge area, and wetlands protection overlay ordinance which meets the Part 5 Environmental Criteria.
Identify sources of potential contamination and act to minimize those threats.				Hall County did a source water assessment plan (SWAP) that evaluates Cedar Creek Reservoir and North Oconee River. Additionally, Hall County has a protected water supply watershed, protected groundwater recharge area, and wetlands protection overlay ordinance which meets the Part 5 Environmental Criteria.

Implement water quality testing to ensure safety of water supply.	2001			Hall County does not have a public water system . The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst.
Review current plant security. Determine and implement additional measures to increase security and reduce the threat of intentional contamination.	Ongoing			Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst. Gainesville has a current project that addresses the long term condition and future of the drinking water state.
Monitor system pressures, tank levels, and bacterial sampling points to determine any distribution problems or contamination of the system.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Identify land use tools to minimize contamination.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Identify necessary runoff control measures.				Hall County has had an effective erosion and sedimentation control program for many years. We adopt a new model ordinance from Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) and Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission as they are provided to ensure our program is following the most updated guidance to protect our local water resources.
Update and distribute a Consumer Confidence Report annually.	N/A			Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville.
Ensure plant operator certification is current.	Ongoing			Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Develop a source water protection plan.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Water Conservation				
Audit the water use system using AWWA standards to identify potential water conservation opportunities.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Develop and implement a water conservation plan.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Enact any necessary water restrictions and enforce restrictions that are in place.	Ongoing			Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville
Preserve and protect flood prone lands and sensitive areas through a greenspace program.	2007			Conservation subdivision ordinance is to preserve in perpetuity unique or sensitive natural resources such as groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, streams etc. code 17.4.30 adoption conservation.
Review local ordinances and codes and determine opportunities for improving water conservation, including retrofitting existing buildings.	2006			Building Inspection does review plans with new plumbing codes and has international building code ordinance. Metro Plan parameter.
Provide rebates for high-efficiency toilets or coordinate toilet retrofits.	Ongoing			Since 2005 City of Gainesville has given a \$75 credit per toilet to any drinking water customers. We advertise as well through education. Metro Plan parameter.
Distribute indoor and outdoor water conservation kits to consumers.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst. Metro Plan parameter.
Develop an implementation and evaluation strategy for conservation plan.				Hall County partners with the City of Gainesville to alert citizen on water restrictions and water conservation education (and Elachee). Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst.
Review water rate structure and determine if it encourages water conservation. Implement appropriate changes.				Hall County does not have a public water system. The system is owned and operated by the City of Gainesville - WaterFirst.
Wastewater Planning				
Evaluate existing facilities (size, capacity, condition, etc.).	2022, 2017, 2012			Expansion to 1.6 mgd SSWRF in 2024. Recently reviewed expansion plans - Spout Springs PER, DDR North Hall WRF.
Identify regulatory issues including existing and pending regulations, compliance issues, and required submittals and documentation. Prepare a plan to meet these requirements.	2020			Hall County Sewer Master Plan and Rate Study: 2020 Update
Perform an alternatives analysis that includes facility requirements, types of processes and facilities, cost-effectiveness, environmental considerations or constraints, and stakeholder issues.	2017			Rerouting flow to SSWRF project Mulberry Back Pumping. Looking to reroute lift stations to provide more economical approach. Working with developers to lower the number of lift station. Spout Springs PER.
Prepare projections of the future service area (service area, service population, high growth areas, sanitary flows, and infiltration/inflows).	2017, 2012			Sewer master planning. Spout Springs PER, DDR North Hall WRF.
Septic Tanks				
Review whether areas on septic tanks should be converted to a sewer system.	Ongoing			Sewer Master Plans are going to be updated by end of 2018. Hall County, Environmental Health and City of Gainesville did a review of septic systems in Hall County with assistance of MNGWPDD.
Create a program to inspect, detect, and correct infiltration problems.	2018			5 Year CIP submitted to Finance and Budget Committee as part of FY2019 Budget.

Assess the feasibility of the project and create a Capital Improvement Plan as part of a Wastewater Master Plan.				
Adopt ordinances to prohibit the installation of septic tanks in floodplains and stream buffers.	2007			Stream buffer ordinance prohibits any septic tanks or septic drain field to be in stream buffer or floodplain area. State of GA On-Site Sewage Management System Rules and Regulations require septic tanks to be at least 25ft from any creek and septic drain line must be at least 50ft from any creek.
Establish limitations on density in siting septic tanks.				determining density limitations odor septic tanks. The Hall County Board of Health
Adopt programs to reduce hazardous waste discharges to septic tanks.	1994			Hazardous waste ordinance prevents disposal of hazardous wastes into surface and subsurface waters with the county limits.
Adopt an ordinance to require routine maintenance, including pumping, of septic systems.				A recommended frequency of pumping residential septic tanks is provided in the septic tank manual. Hall County has worked with the Metro Water group to distribute pamphlets to citizen especially in its Environmental Health Office where citizen obtain permits for septic tanks.
Wastewater Treatment Plants				
Adopt a policy of treating wastewater to a level that meets or exceeds all regulatory standards.	Jan 2004, Oct 2011 & 2017			produces reuse quality water at the fraction of the permitted limits. Spout Springs WWTP Expansion, DO Upgrade.
Assess the level of wastewater treatment used in your POTW and the impact upon its receiving water body and watershed.	2011			EID and Watershed Assessment were created. Watershed Protection Plan, DDR.
Adopt programs to reduce hazardous waste discharges to wastewater collection system.	2020			Provided pamphlets to HOA and showed HOA Manager a site that could distribute digitally.
Management (CMOM) audit.				completed, a complete evaluation will be conducted Need to review Sewer Use
Ensure that plant operator certifications are current.	Annually			Certification Levels annually.
Conduct a cost-effective analysis of residual bio solid recycling or composting.				Hall County is hauling sludge to Lamar County Landfill. Looking into taking the sludge to Jackson County once their drying facility starts-up.
Provide educational materials on the uses and safety of bio solid recycling and/or composting, if bio solids are recycled or composted.	N/A			
Water Reclamation and Reuse				
Identify potential uses of reclaimed water within the community.	Discontinued 2022			Discontinued because it was not cost effective.
Include reclamation and reuse as part of conservation plans.	N/A			
Educational Outreach				
Conduct public information campaign regarding storm drains, fertilizer and pesticide use and storage, management of hazardous materials, etc.	Ongoing			Hall County contracts with the Elachee Nature Center to educate Hall County students and citizens, we have a retrofit kit distribution with the City of Gainesville, and Rivers Alive stream clean up. Educational outreach is also coordinated with Lake Lanier Stakeholders, Lake Lanier Association and City of Gainesville.
Develop a volunteer Adopt-a-Stream program or other citizen participation program.				City of Gainesville has a stream cleanup twice a year.
Involve the public in the protection of greenspace as a means to protect habitat and water quality.	2000			Hall County adopted their Greenspace Protection Plan after a series of seven public meetings to build broad public enthusiasm for the program. One of the goals of the program is to preserve open space in 5 categories of watersheds, primary stream buffering and greenways, open space, agriculture lands and comprehensive plan protections.
Provide Information on drinking water source and quality in addition to CCR				Provided in public education, City of Gainesville agreement and Elachee Public education.
Implement a radon education program.				Hall County provides funding to the University of Georgia Extension Service that provides information about Radon and water contamination in wells.
Involve stakeholders within the community to participate in creating and implementing a water conservation education plan.	2007			We have a steering committee meeting that is held twice a year. It includes City of Gainesville, Flowery Branch, and City of Oakwood. Also, includes the public and developers.
Conduct public information campaign regarding water conservation.				Brochures in business licenses. We have an education program with Elachee Nature Center.
Conduct public information campaigns regarding proper septic tank siting, inspection, and maintenance.	2007			Hall County, City of Gainesville, Flowery Branch, and City of Oakwood and Environmental Health hold meetings to encourage proper septic maintenance.
Create and implement an education campaign to inform the public of water treatment standards and practices.	2001			The City of Gainesville has an educational program that goes throughout the Hall County School system. This also includes annual CCR reports sent to residents.
Provide educational materials on reclaimed water, its uses and benefits.				Information on County's website. Need to place some handouts at Sterling's sales center and library.
Regional Water Planning				

Participate in regional water supply planning.	Ongoing			Hall County is a very active member of Metro North Georgia Water Planning District and keeps abreast of MNGWPD Plan Updates and Ordinance changes. Also, Hall County participates in a regional collaborative effort to protect the water resources of the upper Chattahoochee River basin through membership in the Upper Chattahoochee Basin Group (UCBG).
Implemented any of the best management practices in your regional plan.	2001			Keep abreast of MNGWPD Plan updates and ordinance changes. All ordinances are up to date.