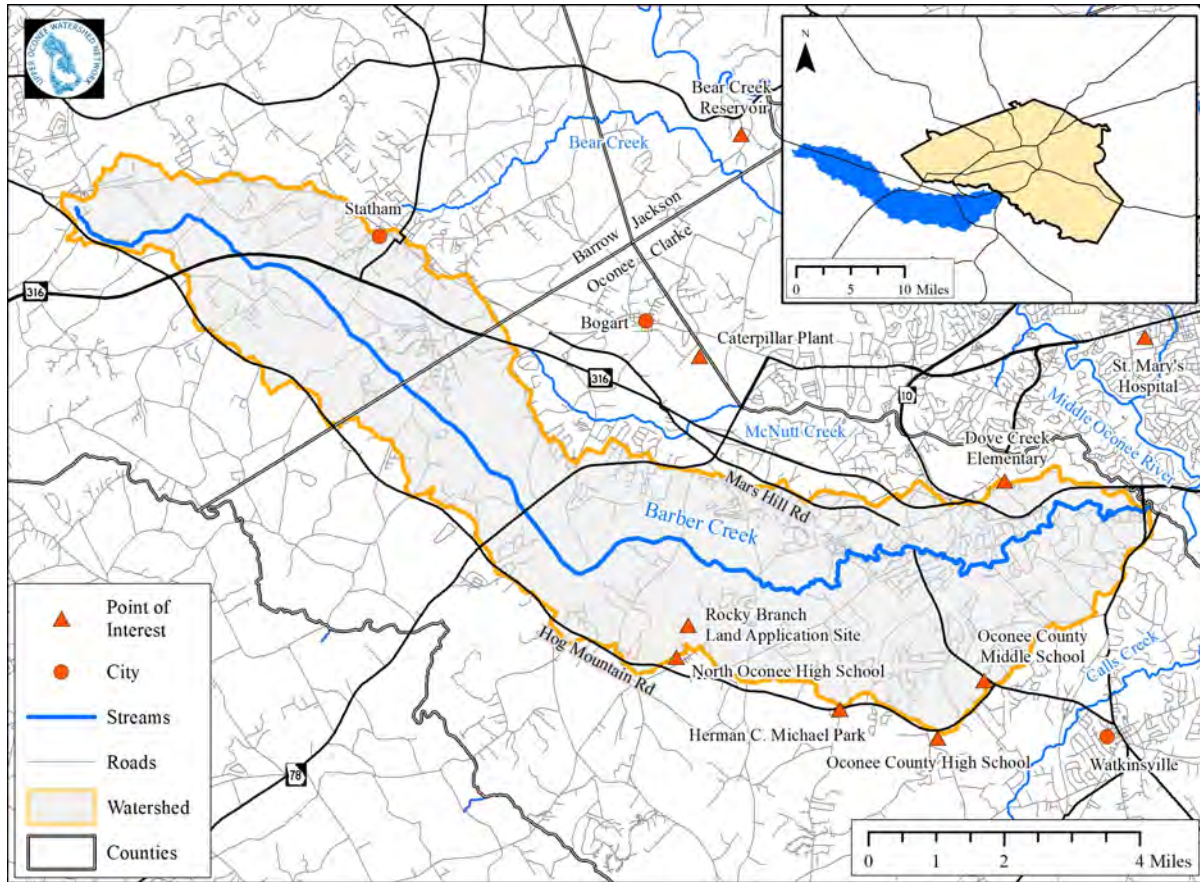


# Where's My Creek?



# Barber Creek



## Where is Barber Creek?

The headwaters of Barber Creek are in Barrow County near the city of Winder. The creek flows southeast through Oconee County, ending in McNutt Creek, before joining the Middle Oconee River just northeast of Watkinsville. The Barber Creek watershed drains an area of 26,850 acres.

The Barber Creek watershed is bordered by the Barrow County line to the northwest, highway 53 (Hog Mountain Rd.) to the south, highway 129 on the southeast. Highway 441S marks the eastern border, and US29/US78 and Mars Hill Rd. roughly demarks the northern border.

Key landmarks include Rocky Branch Land Application System, North Oconee High School, Prince Avenue School, Malcom Bridge Elementary and Middle Schools, Lake Wellbrook, and Crystal Hills.

## Why Care???

Nonpoint source pollution from storm event runoff washes pollutants from parking lots, roads, and other impervious surfaces into the creek. The runoff carrying sediment, fertilizers, or animal waste poses a threat to water quality. Portions of Barber Creek provide a habitat for the threatened Altamaha Shiner.

## Watershed Issues!



### Impervious Surfaces

Due to development, there are large areas of impervious surface where water cannot soak into the ground. This can cause increased runoff which leads to erosion and sediment buildup in the creek.



### Nutrient Pollution

Barber Creek has elevated levels of nutrients, specifically nitrogen, which can be caused by overuse of fertilizer, stormwater runoff, and sewage discharges. This can cause algal blooms and deplete oxygen in the water.



### Buffer Zone Reduction

It is unlawful to remove vegetation within 25 feet of a stream in Oconee County. Riparian buffers stabilize soil, filter runoff, and slow down rushing water before it enters the stream. Buffers in the Barber Creek watershed have been impacted by development.



### Poo-lution

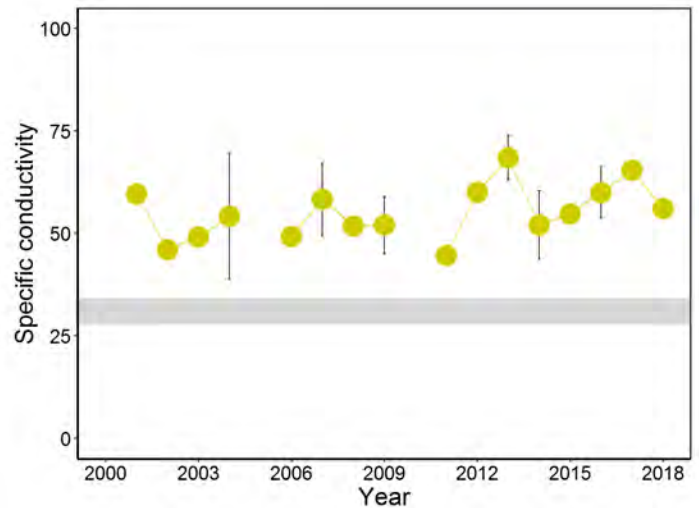
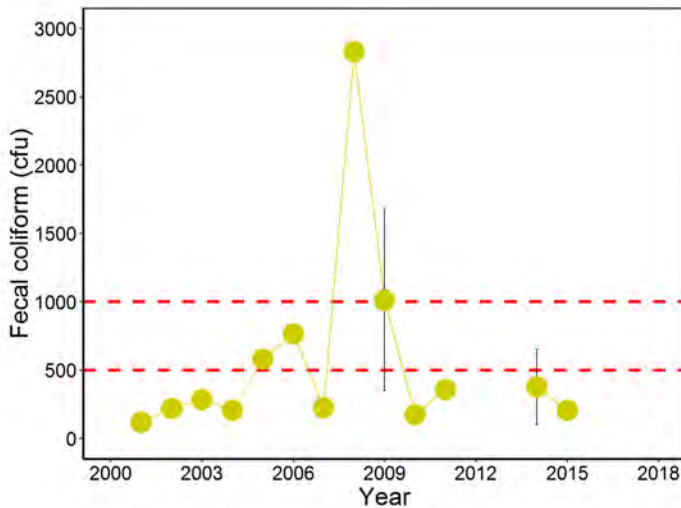
Barber Creek has abnormally high levels of fecal coliforms (poop). This is due to leaking sewer pipes, sewer overflows, and animal waste.



### Overloaded with Sediments

Most of Barber Creek's stream bed is filled with sand and sediments which leads to poor stream health and reduced diversity of aquatic life.

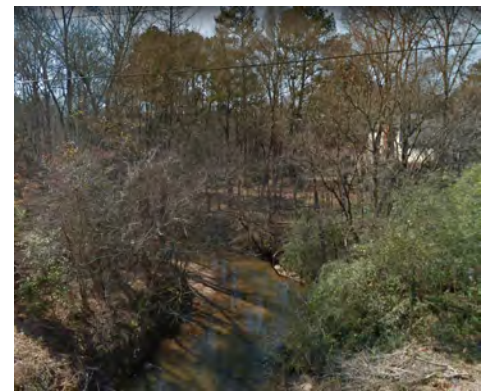
# Water Quality in Barber Creek



**Fecal coliform** bacteria are an indicator of pollution from human and animal waste. *E. coli* is a species of coliform bacteria. The dashed red line at 500 cfu demarks threshold for recreational activity (not recommend above). The higher threshold indicates major contamination.

**Specific conductivity** is a measurement of dissolved solids in water. Regular monitoring helps determine baseline levels. Fluctuations in these levels are an indicator of pollution. The grey shading indicates baseline level of a typical minimally impacted stream in our region.

In the graphs above, each point represents the average concentration within a year. The vertical bars indicate the variation in that measurement.



## How You Can Help



**Reduce fertilizer application.** Contact the UGA Cooperative Extension Office for a soil test kit to determine soil fertility in your lawn or garden.

**Pick up your pet's waste** to prevent fecal coliforms from ending up in your creek.



**Plant native vegetation** in riparian buffers along stream banks to help remove pollutants and reduce erosion.

**Use permeable pavement** to allow infiltration of water when it rains.



**Disconnect roof downspouts from drainage systems** to reduce the amount of concentrated stormwater runoff leaving your property.

**Harvest rainwater** to reduce runoff and use it to water your plants and garden.



**Create rain gardens** with plants and sandy soils to drain stormwater and filter nutrients and other pollutants.

**Pick up trash** from your neighborhood and the stream.



## Become a UOWN member today!

The Upper Oconee Watershed Network is dedicated to protecting water resources and improving stream health in your watershed through community-based advocacy, monitoring, education, and recreation.



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