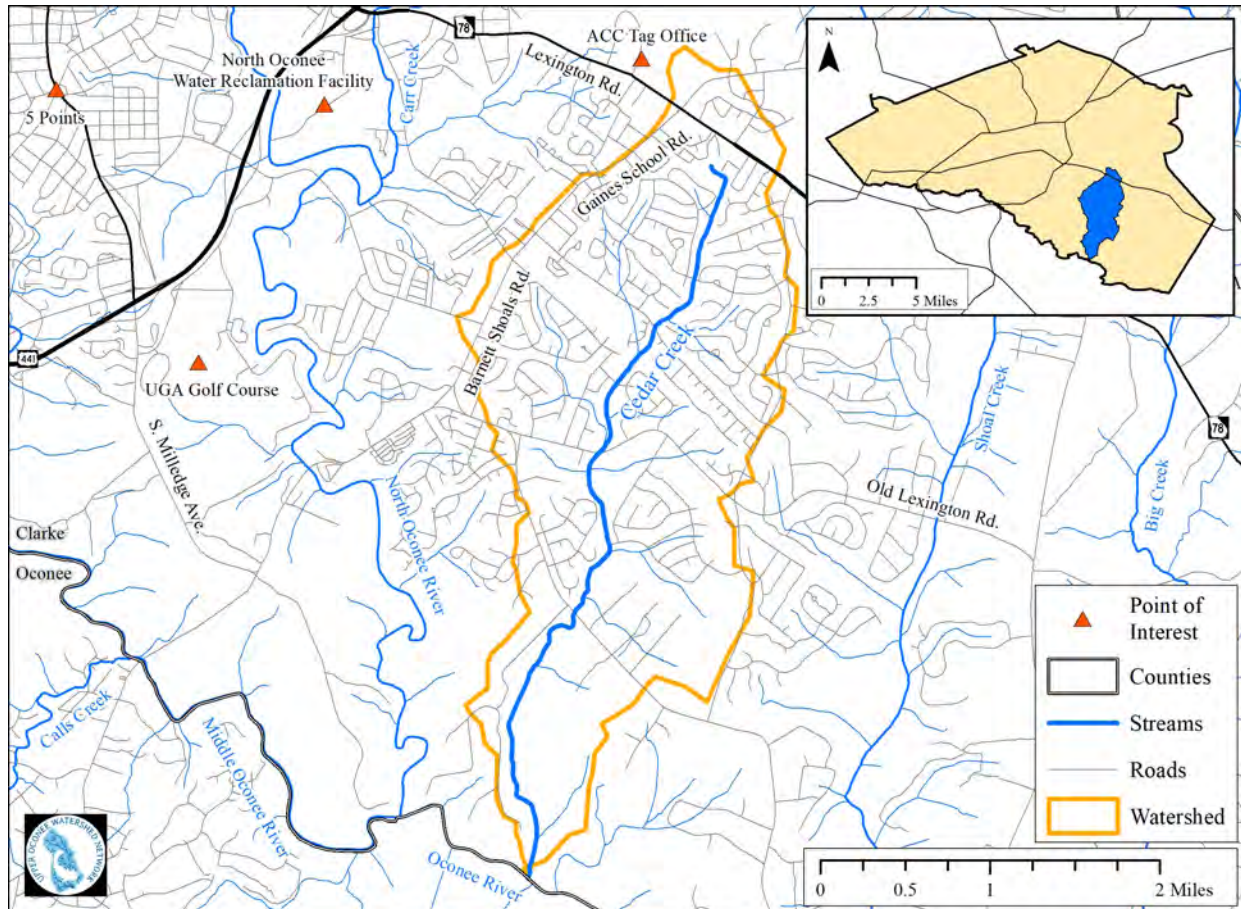


Where's My Creek?



Cedar Creek



Where is Cedar Creek?

The Cedar Creek drainage basin lies outside of Loop 10 in the eastern part of Athens-Clarke County. Its headwaters lie just south of Lexington Road Road and its confluence with the Middle Oconee is at the border between Clarke and Oconee Counties.

Most of the land in this drainage basin consists of residential properties with some commercial property in and around the headwaters. There are three schools in the watershed: Cedar Shoals High School, Barnett Shoals Elementary, and Athens Montessori School.

The Cedar Creek Water Reclamation Facility treats wastewater from much of East Athens. The plant releases treated wastewater, effluent, into the Oconee River below the confluence of the North Oconee and Middle Oconee Rivers.

Why Care?

The stream bed of Cedar Creek is choked with sand and sediment. This is largely the result of past agricultural use combined with current suburban and commercial development in the north half of Cedar Creek. The impervious surfaces increased peak flow, causing erosion and sedimentation for the entire stream.

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.



Low Oxygen and Macroinvertebrates

Creek has low levels of oxygen which makes it hard for aquatic organisms to survive. This, paired with low pH, makes Carr Creek a harsh environment for macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects), fish, and frogs.



Buffer Zone Reduction

It is unlawful to remove vegetation within 75 feet of a stream in Athens-Clarke County. Riparian buffers stabilize soil, filter runoff, and slow down rushing water before it enters the stream. Buffers in the Cedar Creek watershed have been impacted by development.



Poo-lution

Cedar 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 Cedar 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 Cedar Creek

Water Quality Indicator	Cedar Creek Measurements	Georgia State Water Quality Benchmarks (2009)
Fecal Coliform Bacteria	> 1,350 colony forming units	< 500 colony forming units
Total Nitrogen	0.907 mg/L	0.7 – 1.2 mg/L
Total Phosphorus	0.035 mg/L	0.06 – 0.24 mg/L
Biological Score	16.5 (Fair)	Excellent: > 22 Good: 17 - 21 Fair: 11 – 16 Poor: < 11

Data Source: Athens Clarke County Stormwater Management Program, 2011

Fecal coliform bacteria are an indicator of pollution from human and animal waste. E. coli is a species of coliform bacteria.

Nitrogen and phosphorus are nutrients often found in fertilizers and detergents. High levels of nutrients can result in algae blooms, causing low oxygen levels in the water and poor stream health.

Biological scores are determined by diversity and abundance of macroinvertebrates (aquatic bugs) in a stream. The macroinvertebrates that are present in a stream can be used to determine stream health.



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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