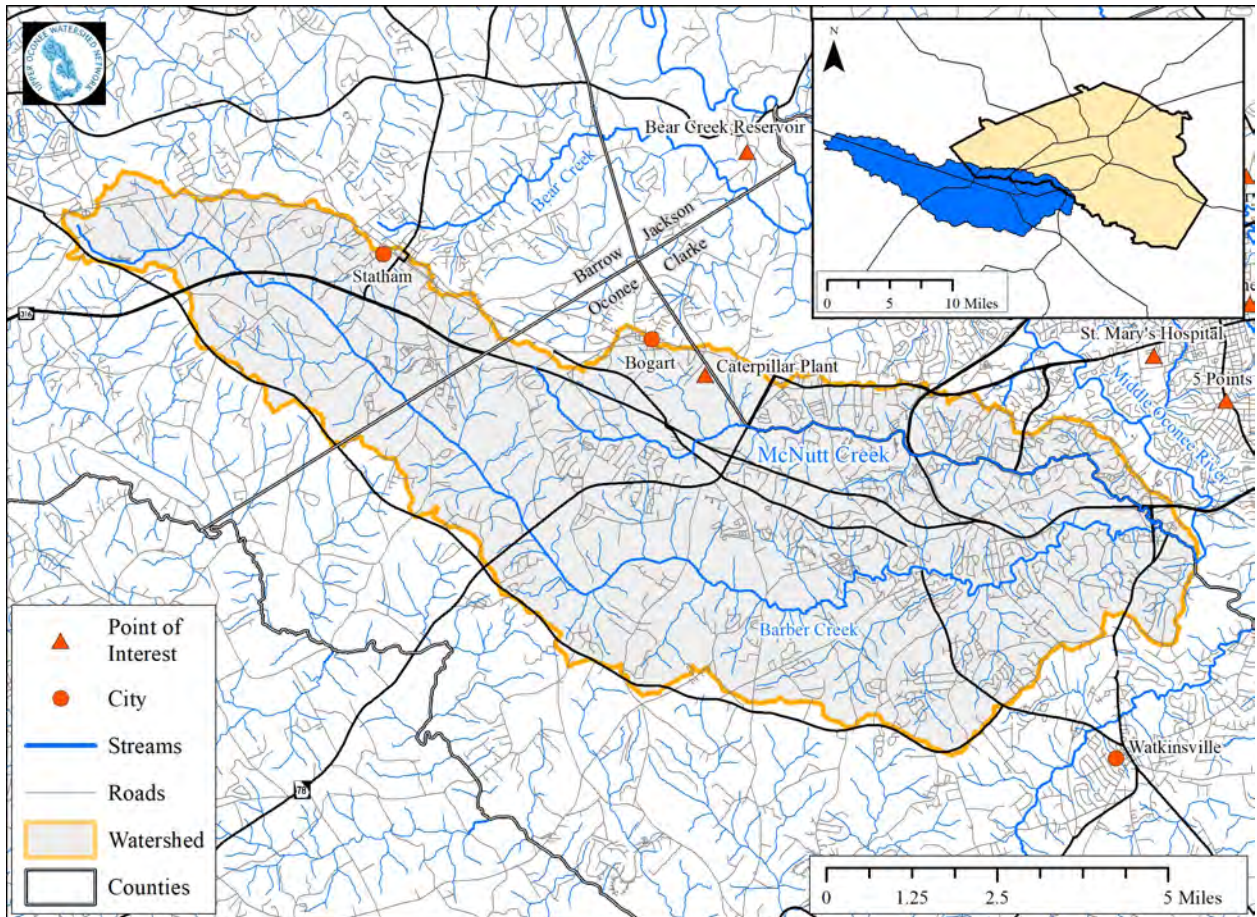


# Where's My Creek?



# McNutt Creek



## Where is McNutt Creek?

McNutt Creek originates in Oconee County in the vicinity of Dials Mill road and Hwy 316. Flowing east, it forms the southern boundary between Athens-Clarke and Oconee counties until it flows into the Middle Oconee at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia.

The McNutt Creek watershed drains an area of 15 square miles. Barber Creek, a main tributary to McNutt Creek, flows into McNutt Creek just upstream of Old Macon Hwy at the historic Puritan Mill.

Notable areas include: Epps Bridge Centre and Parkway, Atlanta Highway, Caterpillar, the Georgia Club, and the Jennings Mill and Pine Hills golf courses. The towns of Bogart and Statham sit on the northern boundary of the watershed.

## Why Care?

McNutt Creek has consistently been characterized as impaired due to fecal pollution. Runoff carries pollutants from parking lots, roads, and other impervious surfaces into McNutt Creek, which flows into the Middle Oconee River. The Middle Oconee joins the North Oconee to form the Oconee River, a primary source of drinking water for many downstream users.

## 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**

McNutt Creek has elevated levels of nutrients, specifically nitrogen, which can be caused by overuse of fertilizer, storm-water 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 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 McNutt Creek watershed have been impacted by development.



### **Poo-lution**

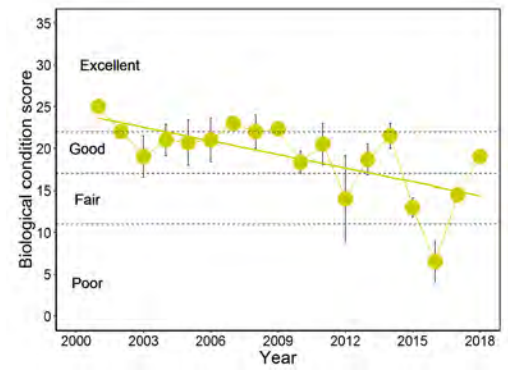
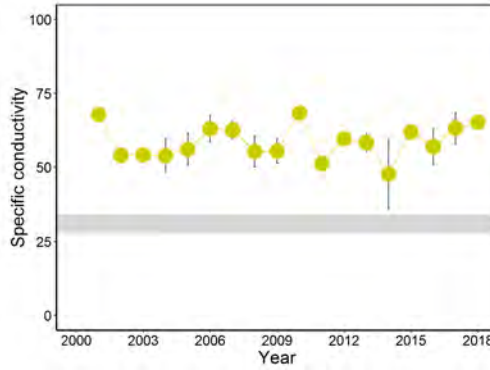
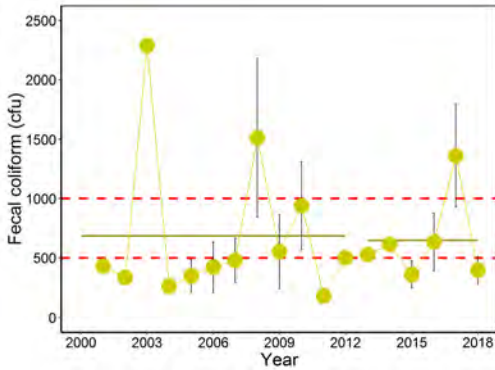
McNutt Creek has high levels of fecal coliforms (poop). This is due to leaking sewer pipes, sewer overflows, and animal waste.



### **Overloaded with Sediments**

Most of McNutt 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 McNutt Creek



**Fecal coliform** bacteria are an indicator of pollution from human and animal waste. *E. coli* is a species of coliform bacteria. The horizontal lines show the average concentration during the previous 5 years. The dashed lines represent limits at which it is unsafe to recreate in the water (>500) or a significant pollution problem (>1000).

**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.

**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.

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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