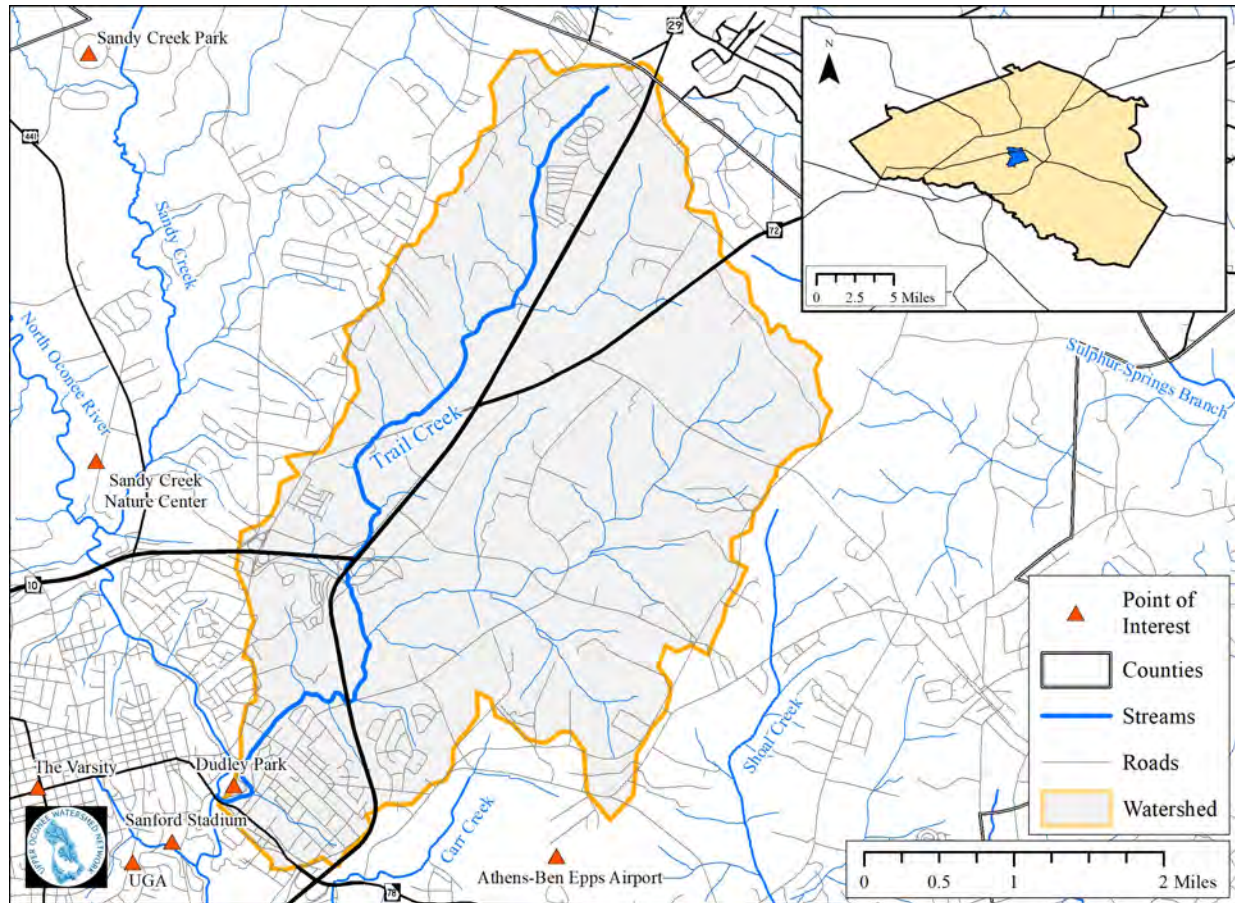


Where's My Creek?



Trail Creek



Where is Trail Creek?

Trail Creek drains a land area of 12.6 square miles. Land use in this area consists of industrial facilities, residential communities, and schools.

The West Fork of Trail Creek begins under Collins Industrial Boulevard and runs parallel to Highway 29 North. The East Fork begins on Voyles Road east of Olympic Drive. The two forks join north of Olympic drive. The creek then flows under Loop 10, exiting at Trail Creek Park. Trail Creek joins the North Oconee River at the south end of Dudley Park.

Easley Mill, Athens original mill, is just downstream of Dudley Park along the Greenway. Remnants are still visible today.

In 2010, a fire at chemical plant in the headwaters of the East Fork contaminated the creek with methanol, para-dichlorobenzene, and formaldehyde, killing all life. It has now recovered.

Why Care?

Runoff carries pollutants from parking lots, roads and other impervious surfaces into Trail Creek. Additionally, the residential area through which the creek flows has some very old (leaking) sewage infrastructure, causing the creek to be polluted. The creek runs through two public parks but children should not enter the water.

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

Trail 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 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 Trail Creek watershed have been impacted by development.



Poo-lution

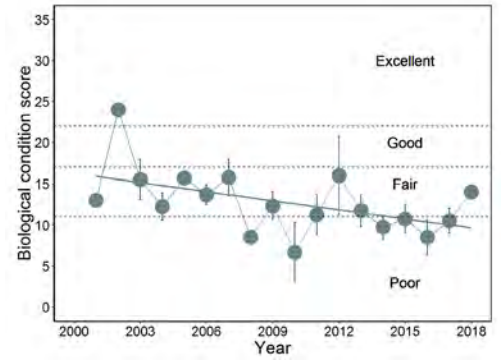
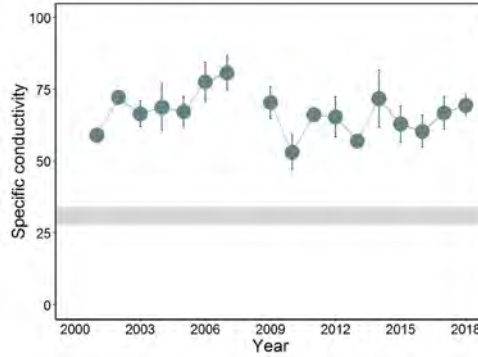
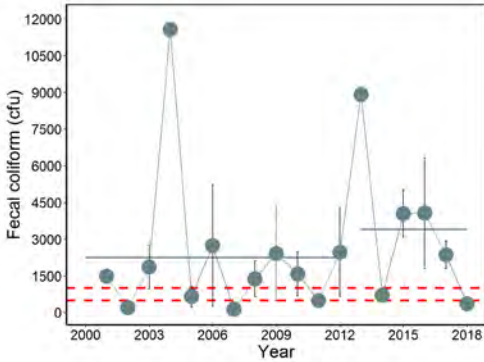
Trail Creek has abnormally high levels of fecal coliforms (poop). This is due to leaking sewer pipes, sewer overflows, and animal waste.



Overloaded with Sediments

Most of Trail 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 Trail 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 (>10000).

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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