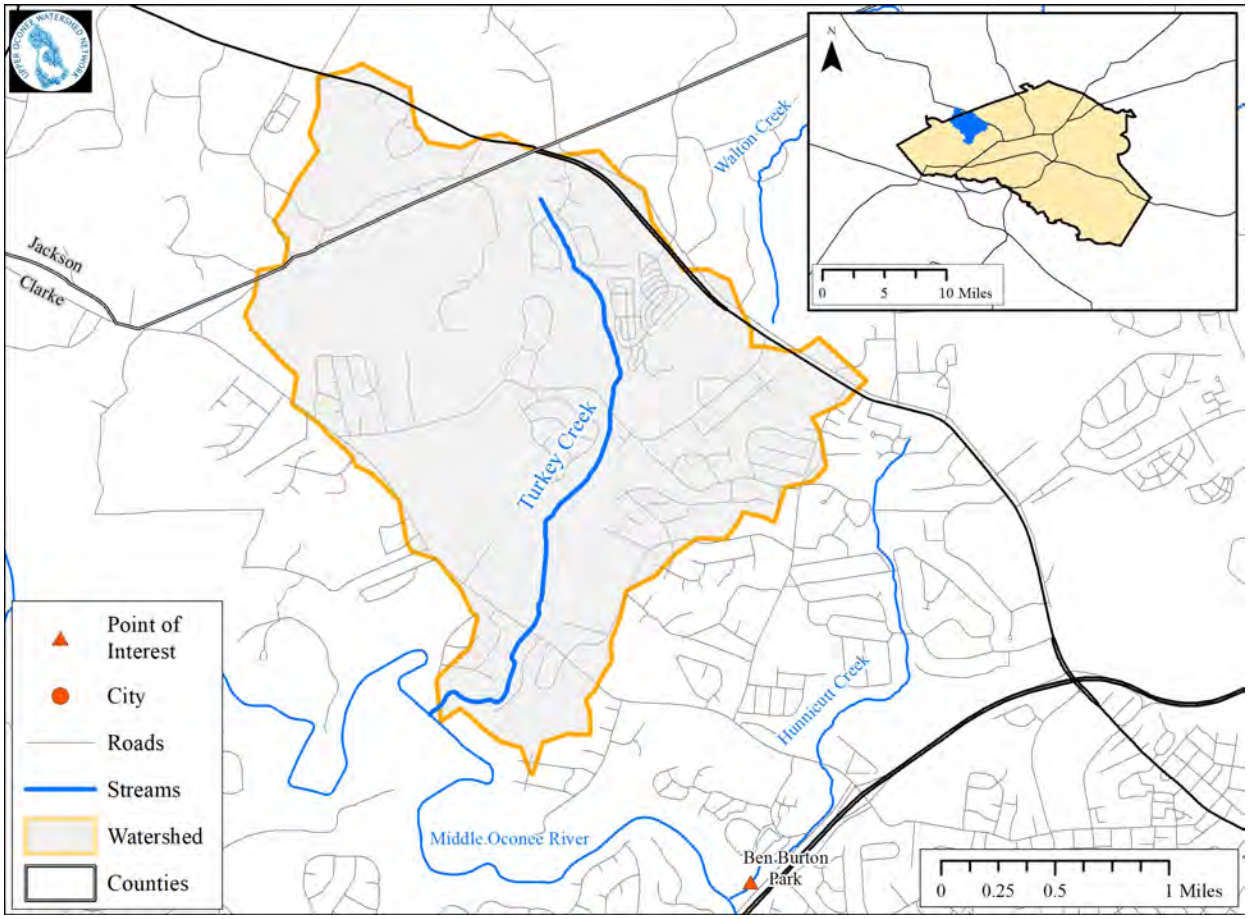
Where's My Creek?

Turkey Creek



Where is Turkey Creek?

The Turkey Creek watershed is located in northwestern ACC and is roughly bounded Tallassee Road to the west, Old Jefferson Road to the northeast, and Quailwood Drive to the southeast. The 9.6 mile creek originates from a lake on Lakeland Drive and flows into the Middle Oconee near Creek Plantation Drive. The creek has two tributaries (not included in the above map). The total drainage area of the watershed is 4.1 square miles, 3.7 square miles are within ACC.

The land cover in the watershed consists of approximately 47% forest, 42% developed land, 4% is pastureland/cropland, and 2% wetland. About 8% of the watershed has impervious cover. The wetland contains signs of early settlement.

Major points of interest include Monsignor Donovan HS, Whitehead Road Elementary, Westgate, Camelot, and Bel Air Heights residential developments.

Why Care?

The creek has been impacted by urban development as evidenced by eroded stream banks and the deterioration of stormwater culverts.
The creek is polluted by urban runoff including fertilizers, fecal matter, and sediment. Its confluence is upstream of ACC's water intake facility, providing drinking water to the city.

Watershed Issues!

Impervious Surfaces
Due to development, there are 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.

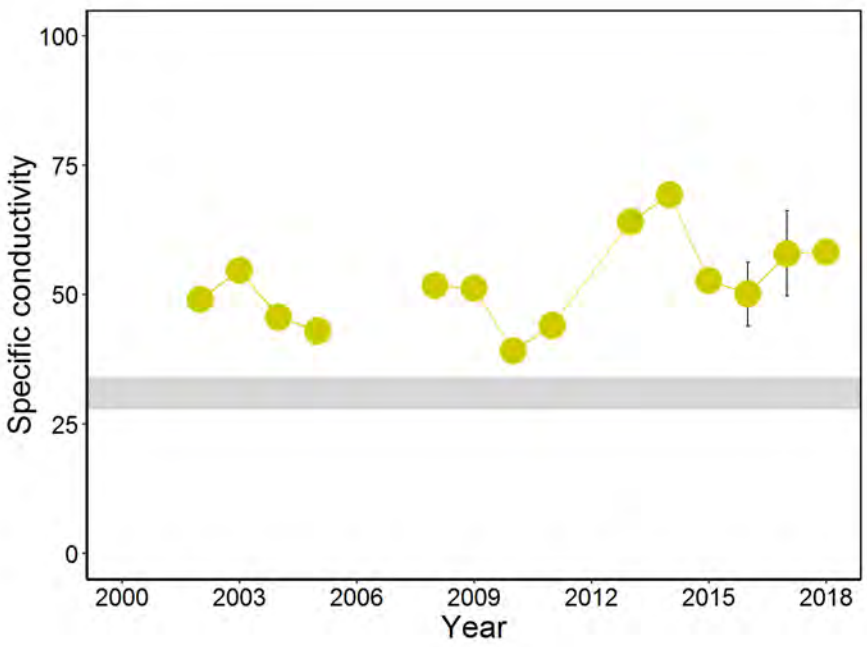
Nutrient Pollution
Turkey Creek has elevated levels of nutrients, specifically nitrogen, which can be caused by overuse of fertilizer, stormwater runoff, and sewage discharges. This can cause algal blooms and deplete oxygen in the water.

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 Turkey Creek watershed have been impacted by development.

Poo-lution
Turkey 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 Turkey 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 Turkey Creek



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 minimially impacted stream in our region.

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

UOWN welcomes citizen scientists willing to regularily monitor Turkey Creek.

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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