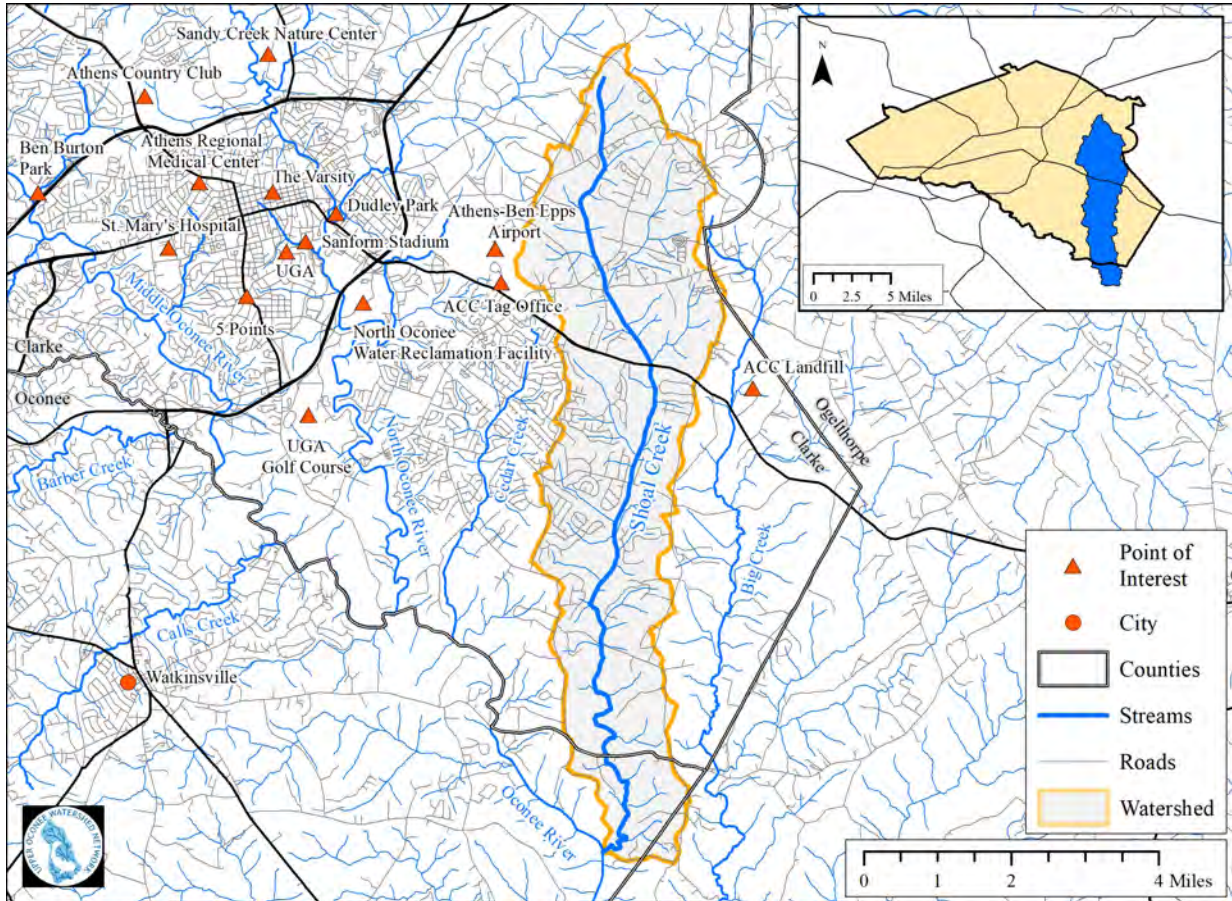


Where's My Creek?



Shoal Creek



Where is Shoal Creek?

Shoal Creek is in eastern Athens-Clarke County. Its watershed roughly depicts the shape of a rectangle with the short sides at the north and south ends of the watershed. It has a land area of over 16 square miles.

Robert Hardeman, Morton, and Belmont Roads form the majority of the eastern boundary of the watershed, while Barnett Shoals and Whit Davis Roads provide much of the boarder to the west. To the north, Moores Grove and Athens Roads provide the boundary with Bob Godfrey Road to the south.

The headwaters of Shoal Creek are approximately a half mile to the south of the intersection of Spring Valley and Moore's Grove Road. There are several farms and ranching operations in the area; cattle has negatively impacted the stream and buffer vegetation.

Why Care?

Shoal Creek discharges into the Oconee River south of the confluence of the North and Middle Oconee Rivers just beyond the boarder of Athens-Clarke County.

The Oconee River is a primary source of drinking water for many downstream users.

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

Shoal 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 Shoal Creek watershed have been impacted by development.



Poo-lution

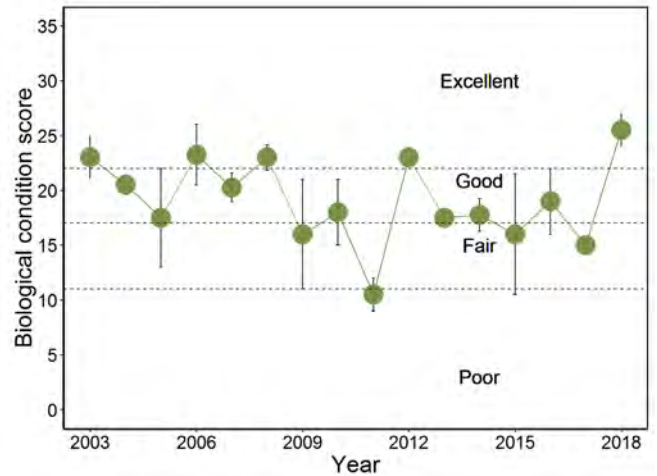
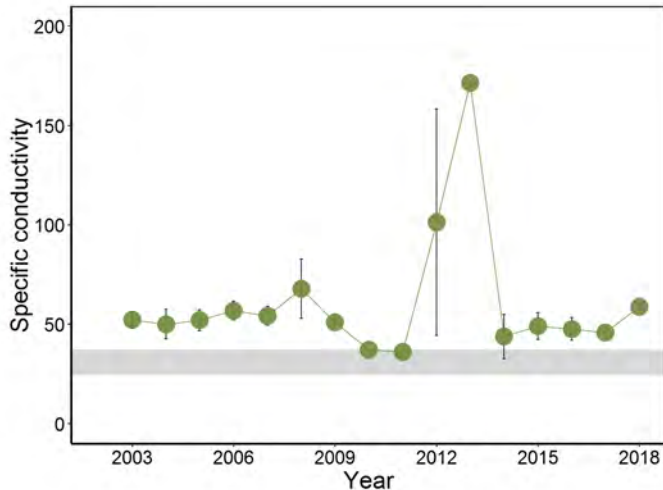
Shoal Creek has abnormally high levels of fecal coliforms (poop). This is due to leaking sewer pipes, sewer overflows, and animal waste.



Overloaded with Sediments

Most of Shoal 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 Shoal 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 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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