



Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association

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Statewide Water Plan

comments

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General Comments

GOWA appreciates the changes made to the original draft. The recognition of septic systems as a long term effective wastewater management tool emphasizes the critical role they play in pollution control and supporting the state's economy. It also aligns the plan with the position of the US Environmental Protection Agency. We do feel, however, that the Plan still needs additional work, particularly in the area of the consumptive use issue as pertaining to onsite wastewater systems.

Section 9 Water Return Practices

On-site Sewage Management Systems: The current plan correctly recognizes that there is significant scientific debate on the septic system consumptive use subject. University of Georgia soil scientists and hydrologists and US Geological Survey scientists have taken issue with the Plan's current stance that septic systems are consumptive users of water. There is a growing body of scientific evidence that demonstrates that returns to source waters from septic systems are much more rapid than the plan currently recognizes. In fact some government funded studies have shown the rapid transport of treated wastewater to surface waters (Up to 280 feet per day in the Floridan Aquifer). The septic system industry in Georgia supports further scientific evaluation of the timing of return flows of treated wastewater. In fact, some research shows that in drought periods streams surrounded by septic systems fare better than those with sewer development. It seems that septic systems actually "bank" water that can be called on in times of drought whereas returns from waste treatment plants flow downstream during wet times and is unavailable during dry periods. GOWA would like to see the language concerning septic systems as consumptive users of water completely removed from the Plan.

Thank you for your assistance.

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