

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS: TRACKING THE STATUS OF GEORGIA'S WATERS

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Abstract Since 1997, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division has published a periodic report titled *Georgia's Environment*. That report has highlighted current issues or pressures affecting the major environmental media (air, water, and land) and presented data on a small number of indicators to illustrate trends related to those pressures.

As part of a broader environmental indicators project, the scope of the report has been expanded to provide a more comprehensive presentation on the state of Georgia's environment, focusing on three primary objectives for environmental management. The revamped report is intended to serve a public outreach and information function, similar to that of the earlier publication. In addition, the 2006 report, along with related work on environmental indicators, is expected to also highlight emerging issues, potential policy needs, and critical data and information gaps.

Development of the 2008 report started with a conceptual model that relates environmental conditions to major human activities that affect those conditions, followed by systematic identification of the indicators feasible to include in a comprehensive assessment of the state of Georgia's environment.

This paper will present the basic outline of the 2008 report, discuss constraints imposed by data availability and current approaches to data collection, and summarize results for select indicators of the condition of Georgia's water resources.