

# A WATER QUALITY DATABASE FOR GEORGIA CITIZENS

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**Abstract.** Five years ago the Environmental Protection Division Outreach Unit initiated an online database for Georgia's volunteer water quality monitoring program. Two years ago the Outreach Unit presented the new volunteer water quality monitoring online database at the Georgia Water Resources Conference. One of the key messages at the time was the need for constant updates and improvements to ensure a relevant and useful database. This presentation will take a critical look at our progress as we continue to build and expand upon our already successful database.

Georgia's volunteer water quality monitoring online database provides support for volunteers and local volunteer coordinators. This online database allows volunteers to take ownership of their efforts by providing a format for their water quality data to be posted and shared with a variety of people, from citizens to local governments and stakeholders. The online database also provides a format for local coordinators to input local program information, keeping track of volunteer level of participation.

Empowering citizens from the grassroots up, this project is a prime example of how emerging technologies can play an important role in data collection and dissemination. Since launching the web-driven database, the Georgia volunteer monitoring program has grown to be one of the largest of its kind in the country, with 200 active monitoring groups and over 400 active monitoring sites.

Specific items to be addressed in this presentation include: database design priorities, data display and access, quality control and program data, program results, and future priorities and design considerations.

Can a statewide database lead in providing community-based support for local watershed organizing, helping to create a sense of community and organize local leaders? Based on the growth of our volunteer monitoring programs since launching the Georgia volunteer monitoring website and online database, we believe the answer is, yes. Can this same database help drive local, regional and statewide activities for watershed protection? Based on the types of organizations accessing our volunteer data, again we believe the answer is, yes. Join us as we showcase the latest capabilities of our online database and pro-

vide an analysis of the capabilities of emerging technologies in disseminating data and helping organize community based water quality monitoring programs.