

Potential Sturgeon Habitat in the Lower Flint River

Wei Zeng, Menghong Wen, and Dongha Kim

Affiliation: Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch, 2 MLK, Jr., Dr. NW, Atlanta GA 30334

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Abstract. In April 2013, investigators at the University of Georgia proposed to study pre- and post-spawning movements of Gulf sturgeon upstream of Jim Woodruff Dam. Since the Dam currently prevents Gulf sturgeon from moving upstream, the researchers planned to artificially relocate Gulf sturgeon upstream of Jim Woodruff Dam, and to tag and track their movements. What remains unclear is the amount of potential spawning habitat upstream of the Dam, particularly in the lower Flint River, and how the amount may change as a result of varying flow conditions. The authors utilized bathymetric survey data of the lower Flint River, obtained substrate information from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and constructed an HEC-RAS model of the River. Using the most adverse hydrologic conditions in the most recent decade, the authors determined the extent of available potential habitat under various flow conditions.