

Post Fish-Kill Monitoring on the Ogeechee River

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Abstract. In May of 2011, the Ogeechee River was the site of the largest fish kill in Georgia's history. In the wake of this event Georgia Southern University initiated a three-year monitoring project in June 2014 to better understand the ecology of the Ogeechee River in the coastal plain. The Ogeechee River basin is a blackwater system characterized by low gradient, low conductivity, high dissolved organic carbon, extensive floodplains, variable discharge, and predominantly sandy substrate. These factors result in a set of distinct challenges to a fixed monitoring protocol that will be discussed. Monitoring ranges from assessments of potential stressors of the river to fish abundance and diversity measures. Fishes are being monitored quarterly at six sites, three above a textile processing plant discharging treated waste into the river and three below the textile plant. Fishes are sampled at each site in single-pass electrofishing transects. We will report fish assemblage metrics (richness, diversity, IBI) from the first quarterly samples.