

# Leaf Decomposition Along a Longitudinal Gradient of the Lower Ogeechee River

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**Reference:** McDowell RJ, CA Pruitt, RA Bahn (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2015 Georgia Water Resources Conference*, April 28-29, 2015, University of Georgia, Athens.

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**Abstract.** Leaf litter decomposition and macroinvertebrate colonization of leaf litter were examined along a longitudinal gradient of the Ogeechee River in southeast GA. Leaf litter packs of sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) were placed at 4 sites along the Ogeechee River and retrieved at two week intervals for ~56 days. Litter materials remaining in leaf packs were dried and weighted to estimate decay rates (-k). In addition, macroinvertebrates collected from leaf packs were sorted, identified to the lowest taxonomic level practical, and classified into functional feeding groups. The mean number of macroinvertebrates found in leaf packs was  $171 \pm 43.20$  SD for oak leaves and  $132 \pm 70.88$  SD.