USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Chattooga River Watershed Plan

In 1999, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division established TMDLs on eight stream segments in the Chattooga River Watershed located in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division estimated that over 85 percent of the water quality impairments from fecal coliform and erosion and sedimentation stemmed from agricultural related activities. In 2000 and 2001, cooperating agencies and representatives from urban, development, municipal, environmental, forestry, and agricultural interests formed the Chattooga River Watershed Group to implement the Natural Resources Conservation Service nine-step process to identify contamination sources and develop a watershed plan. After four years of work, it was determined that the City of Clayton's leaking waster water treatment facility was responsible for much of the fecal coliform contamination. Modeling studies showed fecal contamination from agricultural runoff to be below water quality standards (100 col/100 ml). Sediment sources from harvested forest land, public forest land and development contributed 63 percent of erosion and sedimentation in the watershed according to modeling activities. Collectively, agricultural lands contributed only 2% of all erosion in the watershed.

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