



Fast Facts

Georgia has spent nearly \$5 million since 1998 on legal costs on the water war and metro Atlanta governments have spent about \$2.4 million since 2001.

More than \$19 million was appropriated for the Governor's Go Fish program to support the development of fish ramps, a visitor's center, and hatchery.

\$7.3 million was appropriated to the Georgia Agricultural Exposition Authority for design, construction, and equipping a new horse barn and practice ring for Perry, Georgia.

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Fund Statewide Water Planning

What's at Stake?

The 2008 Legislature passed a Statewide Water Plan to plan water management in Georgia. To implement the plan, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) must conduct resource assessments, then develop Water Development and Conservation Plans for 10 regional planning councils. It is critical that EPD has adequate funding to conduct thorough water resource assessments, implement regional planning, and provide a transparent process that allows for public input and local action. This is in addition to its statutory duties to protect downstream communities, ensure efficient water use all the time by all users and ensure water clean enough to drink and fish safe enough to eat.

Challenges

Georgia EPD established an initial 3-year Statewide Water Plan budget in the amount of \$35.8 million dollars by allocating both federal and state funds:

Year	Federal	State	Total
2009	\$6.9	\$4.2	\$11.1M
2010	\$7.4	\$5.4	\$12.8M
2011	\$7.1	\$4.8	\$11.9M

However, at the request of the Governor, the Georgia legislature did not appropriate the first year's funds. The Statewide Water Plan was not included as a line item in the state budget for FY 2009. The first year of funding was spent off-budget. The funding came from multiple sources including the Federal Clean Water State Revolving Fund (\$3.07 million), the Federal Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (\$7.01 million), and previous year's State appropriations (\$1.05 million). We can presume that first year spending occurred as scheduled.

Now, Georgia is in the middle of a budget crisis and additional funding for 2010 and 2011 is at risk, particularly for new initiatives, like the Statewide Water Plan.

In addition, much of the Water Plan spending is not designated for government agencies, many of which already have in hand much of the data needed for planning. Instead, more than half the funding over the next three years is earmarked for the private sector, which is expected to recycle data and material already compiled by state and federal agencies. Of the \$35.8 million, approximately \$20 million is allocated for private sector contracts, approximately \$8 million is allocated for inter-agency agreements, and approximately \$8 million is allocated for the State to implement the Statewide Water Plan.

Next Steps

- The Governor should recommend and the legislature must appropriate the funds necessary for the Statewide Water Plan as scheduled.
- Currently, EPD contemplates spending \$7.6 - \$14 million to contract private sector work for components of the water resource assessments, funds which may only purchase information the government already has on hand. The Legislature should work to avoid wasteful, duplicative spending and urge EPD to shift contracts to public institutions, such as state and federal agencies and public universities whenever the resource assessments can be conducted by public agencies.
- EPD is also planning to contract work for the development of the Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans for each of the 10 Regional Planning Councils and has budgeted \$5-9 million for the work. Contracting for the regional water plans should be similarly directed to public agencies.