



2. The Suwannee-Satilla Water Planning Region

The Satilla River flows to the southeast across the region from its headwaters in Ben Hill County and discharges to the Atlantic Ocean between Cumberland and Jekyll Islands (EPD, 2002). The Satilla River is 200 miles long and has a drainage area of approximately 3,940 mi², which is completely contained within Georgia. Like the Suwannee River, the Satilla River is a blackwater stream.

The St. Marys River is 90 miles long and has a drainage area of approximately 1,300 mi², 59% of which lies in Georgia (EPD, 2002) and the remainder in Florida. Like the Suwannee River, the St. Marys River is a blackwater stream. The St. Marys River flows north and east, forming the border between southeast Georgia and northeast Florida before discharging into the Atlantic Ocean.

The Suwannee, Satilla, and St. Marys Rivers are popular fishing resources to the region. There are several species of fish found in the rivers, offering excellent fishing for chain pickerel, warmouth, largemouth bass, bluegill, topminnow, sunfish, crappie, and catfish. The coastal estuaries of the Satilla and St. Marys Rivers also provide recreationally and commercially important ecosystems for fish, crustaceans, and shellfish.

Several parks along these rivers provide an important recreational resource for the region, offering opportunities for various outdoor activities. Some of the more popular parks in the region include General Coffee State Park in Nichols, the Cumberland Island National Seashore, Reed Bingham State Park near Adel, and Crooked River State Park. Perhaps the most well-known natural habitat and recreational resource in the region is the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The Okefenokee Swamp is home to 233 bird species, 49 mammal species, 64 reptile species, and 37 amphibian species. The swamp is also home to over 600 species of plants.

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater is a very important resource for the Suwannee-Satilla Region. Figure 2-2 depicts the major aquifers of Georgia. Based on 2015 projected pumping data provided by Georgia EPD, approximately 98% of groundwater supplied in the region is from the Floridan aquifer, which is one of the most productive groundwater aquifers in the United States. The Floridan aquifer is primarily comprised of limestone, dolostone, and calcareous sand. The aquifer is generally confined, but at its northern

Figure 2-2: Major Georgia Aquifers

