

Executive Summary

Contamination coming down Cat Creek into the Withlacoochee River is the reason for this Plan. GA-EPD has listed the subject stream stretches in TMDLs for low Dissolved Oxygen (DO). Further testing has revealed fecal bacteria as a related problem. To find the contamination sources so they can be fixed requires more testing and of more types, including DNA testing, which is expensive. Such a plan will facilitate applications for grants to fund such testing, as well as education, outreach, and fixes to the problems.

Initial evidence for fecal contamination getting into the Withlacoochee River upstream from Valdosta came from water quality tests by the City of Valdosta at North Valdosta Road (US 41). Lowndes County has tested upstream on Cat Creek to the Berrien County line and confirmed the problem. WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS) has demonstrated that the contamination usually does not come from farther upstream on the Withlacoochee River than Cat Creek, and that various parts of Cat Creek and its feeder creeks are contaminated at various times. Frequent testing of all those creeks, especially after heavy rains, is needed to determine the sources of contamination and low DO.

Such testing will inform outreach to landowners and other stakeholders about potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) to fix the sources of the contamination. Once potential BMPs are identified, various sources of grant and other funding can come into play. This Plan includes metrics to determine initial and target reductions in contamination and increases in DO in Cat Creek and its feeder creeks.

Overview of the Problem

Preliminary testing by WWALS on Cat Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and Beatty Branch indicates that the source is probably not the Ray City wastewater plant where **Beaverdam Creek** joins Cat Creek, since we have gotten high E. coli results upstream on Beaverdam Creek.

It could be Ray City sewage, except some of the high results seem to be upstream from Ray City.

There are pecan groves next to some feeder creeks, which rumor has it may be being fertilized with chicken manure, which could do it: DNA testing would sort that out.

We also need to test Rays Mill Pond at the top of Beaverdam Creek, just in case.

For **Beatty Branch**, while we got high results below the Moody AFB wastewater plant, we also got high results upstream at Bemiss Road. There is nothing upstream of there except the base itself, which is puzzling.

Meanwhile, downstream of the Moody AFB wastewater plant there are cows grazing near Cat Creek. They may or may not be contributing to the creek contamination.

Finally, there are many septic systems near small feeder creeks towards the bottom of Cat Creek and elsewhere.

For more about specific locations of potential contamination sources, see [Ranking of Contamination Sources](#) in [A. Identify causes and sources of pollution](#).

See also [Appendix B: Maps](#).