

Prime Farmland

In Georgia, only 21% of the entire state is covered with Prime Farmland, and as such, it is a scarce resource for Georgia and for the Nation as a whole. Characteristics of Prime Farmland include: dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation; favorable temperature and growing season; acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity; acceptable level of salt or sodium; few or no rocks; permeable soils to air and water; not excessively eroded land; not saturated with water for long periods of time; does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flood. No new Prime Farmland is being created and the resource is finite, so preservation of this land is critical. The proposed development appears to be located on Prime Farmland in Irwin County and therefore should be considered as a reduction in the amount of Prime Farmland existing in the county.

The Southern Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan of 2023 also contains a section on water usage and conservation which includes many goals and directions on how to handle water usage in Georgia. The following are the Goals from the Regional Plan.

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:

- 1) Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural water needs, including all agricultural sectors (this includes the agro-forestry economy of the region).
- 2) Manage groundwater and surface water to encourage sustainable economic and population growth in the region.
- 3) Manage the region's and state's water resources in a manner that preserves and protects private property rights.
- 4) Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human needs, while protecting environmental resources.
- 5) Identify opportunities to optimize existing and future supplies and water and wastewater infrastructure.
- 6) Promote efficient use and management of surface and groundwater resources to allow for sufficient supplies for current and future generations.
- 7) Protect and manage surface and groundwater recharge areas to ensure sufficient long term water supplies for the region.
- 8) Protect, maintain, and, where appropriate and practicable, identify opportunities to enhance water quality and river base flows.
- 9) Protect and maintain regional water-dependent recreational opportunities.
- 10) Identify opportunities to manage stormwater to improve water quantity and quality.
- 11) Identify and implement cost-effective water management strategies.
- 12) Seek to provide economically affordable power and water resource service to all citizens of the region.
- 13) Identify and implement actions to better measure and share water use data and information.

- Although Southern Georgia Regional Commission is not versed in the calculation methods of daily water usage and water conservation, the following excerpt is from the Irwin County Data Center Ordinance and concerns the type of cooling system required for data centers and also requires a hydrogeologic study prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

From the Irwin County Data Center Ordinance - April 6, 2026

- [Water Usage Standards. \(1\) Only closed-loop cooling systems are permitted in Irwin County.](#)
[\(2\) There shall be no discharge of cooling water into public sewers or ground without treatment.](#)
[\(3\) Before a certificate of occupancy is provided, all data centers shall submit a hydrogeologic study conducted by an independent third-party engineering firm showing estimated annual water usage.](#)