

THE RIPPLE EFFECT: EXPLORING GEORGIA'S UNIQUE STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (GA AAS), a state-wide volunteer water quality monitoring program, relies on the ripple effect to reach an ever widening population. With increased demand on our resources and little increase in manpower and funding, Georgia's AAS program had to find a way to keep pace. We've done that by creating a network of educators who work in cooperation with our state run program.

During this presentation we will explore the cooperative relationships between the State and local partners, learn about the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plan that was developed to support these partnerships and the success that the ripple effect has provided. Come join us to learn about the ripple created by GA AAS and its local partners.

KEYWORDS

Cooperation between State, Local and Non-Government Programs; Quality Assurance, Quality Control Plan; Local Volunteer Network

INTRODUCTION

What is the ripple effect? The ripple effect is our system of program expansion. Utilizing a network of certified GA AAS trainers, the ripple flows from two State Coordinators out to over 60 certified trainers, whom train over 2,000 certified volunteers annually. The state program provides the framework – free resources including manuals, support, training, feedback. This foundation is in place for any group interested in participating. By providing the tools and training needed to implement local programs, GA AAS has created a unique opportunity for local agencies to partner with the State of Georgia in promoting water quality data collection.

In exchange for state assistance, local groups that choose to partner with GA AAS provide training for volunteers, share local data, promote GA AAS to their community, and promote the goals of GA AAS. Although individual programs share specific aspects of the GA AAS program, all are given the freedom to implement the program in a unique manner to best serve their community. Using the GA AAS QA/QC Plan as a guideline, participating Community Coordinators design workshops, training sessions, and community events to compliment local efforts to improve water quality education and data collection. Through this unique partnership, GA AAS has been able to keep up with the demand for water quality education.