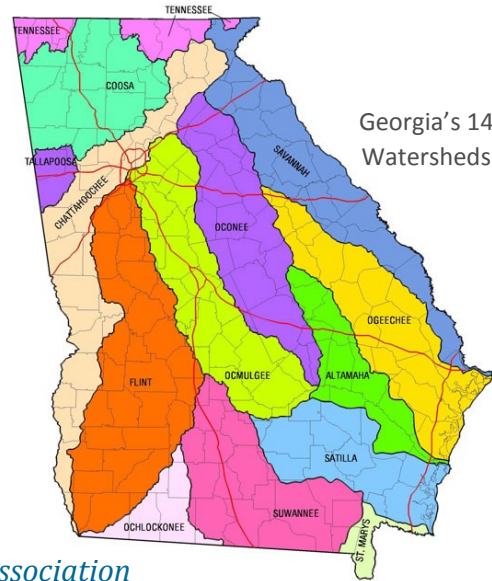


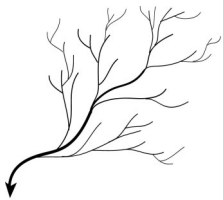
Stories from Intrenchment & Proctor Creek



Georgia's 14 Watersheds

THE WESTSIDE & EASTSIDE CONVERGE

Chris Lemons, President, The Peoplestown Neighborhood Association



Atlanta sits atop the Appalachian Continental Divide. The area runs along DeKalb Avenue and Lee Street in Atlanta. This is the line where water on the western side flows to the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers and onto the Gulf of Mexico; and water on the eastern side flows to the Ocmulgee River and onto the Atlantic Ocean. These divides are called watersheds.

The City of Atlanta lies in the watersheds of the Chattahoochee, Flint and Ocmulgee watersheds. Each of these watershed has sub-watersheds, made up of local creeks called tributaries, each like a branch of a tree. Proctor Creek in West Atlanta is a tributary of the Chattahoochee River. Intrenchment Creek in South Atlanta is a tributary of the South River, flowing into the Ocmulgee River.

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WHAT IS THE ATLANTA WATERSHED LEARNING NETWORK?

Jason Dozier, Resident and Candidate for Atlanta City Council

The Atlanta Watershed Learning Network is bringing together people from two of Atlanta's most impacted watersheds - Proctor Creek and Intrenchment Creek. Each of these creeks begin in downtown Atlanta, where concrete sidewalks, roads, buildings, and parking lots prevent water from being absorbed into the ground. During heavy rain events, the water has nowhere to go and pours into nearby neighborhoods, causing flooding issues throughout the communities.

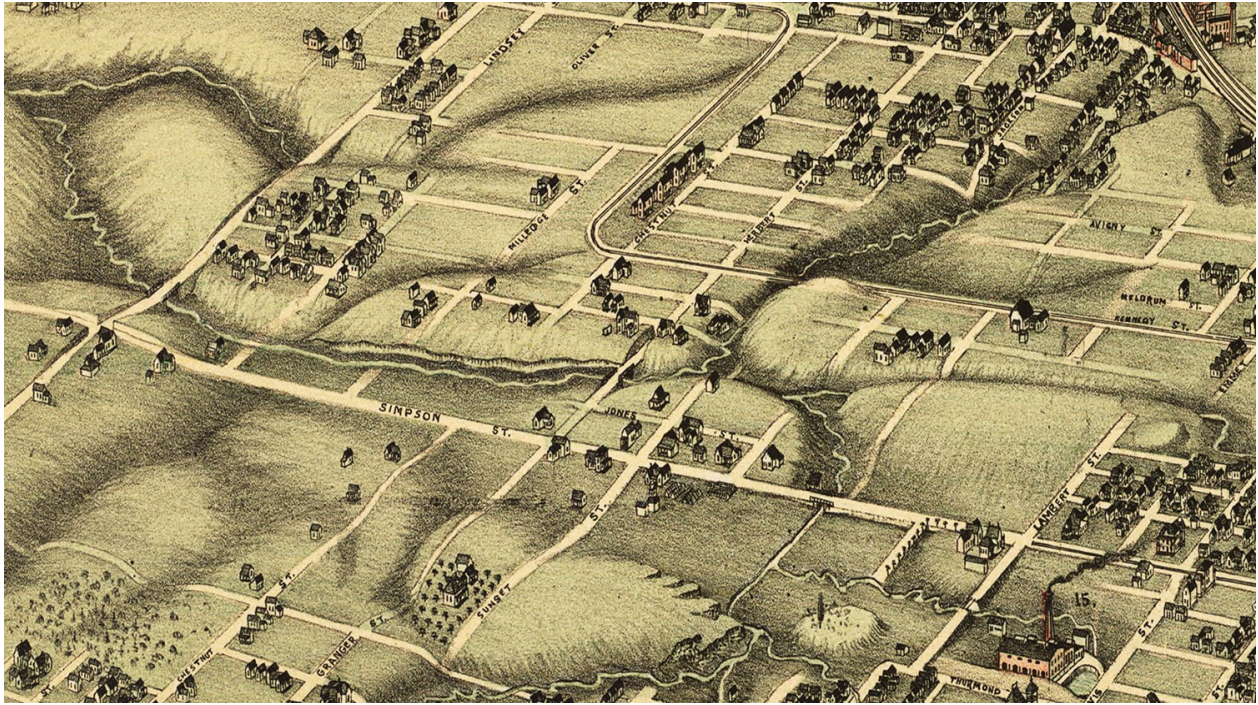


Session 1, April 29, 2017

Led by ECO-Action and West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, residents are gaining knowledge about the causes of stormwater flooding, the health and economic impacts offlooding caused their communities, and how they can be empowered to advocate for sustainable solutions to these problems.

CREEKS ONCE FLOWED FREELY IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

Proctor Creek in 1892, with visible streams flowing through the English Avenue and Vine City neighborhoods.



TODAY THE CITY IS FILLED WITH CONCRETE

Downtown Atlanta today is heavily urbanized, with roads, sidewalks, parking lots, businesses and homes, all of which prevent water from absorbing into the ground.



THE PROCTOR CREEK WATERSHED: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

by Donna Stephens, Resident and Member of the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council, Chair of Membership Committee

As a native of Atlanta, I have lived in the Proctor Creek watershed my entire life. My memories are full of vibrant images of life. There was economic development everywhere. There wasn't a food desert anywhere. From corporate retailers to mom and pop shops, everyone thrived. Stores, churches, and schools filled each neighborhood. I didn't know that I lived in the Proctor Creek watershed, but I thought I lived in a pretty good city. The quality of life appeared to be excellent! The watershed was also beautiful homes and clean streets. I honestly do not remember any trash anywhere. Vacant homes did not exist.

But over the past few decades, because of development and poor city planning, the Proctor Creek and Intrechment Creek watersheds have suffered from repeated flooding. This flooding has left many families with sub-standard housing filled with mold and mildew. Some residents have had to move as a result.

During my training with the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network, I have experienced many learning opportunities. As a resident of the Proctor Creek watershed, I have witnessed a variety of stormwater issues. Learning about the green infrastructure has been interesting, to say the least. Discovering the role of parks in stormwater management was an “aha” moment for me. Lindsey Street Park (English Avenue's first) is an excellent example of green infrastructure in the installation of parks. Even though the park is small, it has a lot of educational value for the neighborhood, city, state, and the nation. The rain garden creates a pleasant recreational oasis for all. The soon-to-be Boone Park West and Cook Park will be welcome green infrastructure additions to the Proctor Creek watershed as well.

I am now more confident as a community advocate because of my participation in the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network.

The peer-to-peer exchanges with residents from both watersheds was eye-opening. Sharing our trials and tribulations has been insightful. Both watersheds are within the City of Atlanta, but they have different city council boundaries, different demographics, and different Neighborhood Planning Units. The new Atlanta Falcons stadium stands at the headwaters of Proctor Creek while the former Atlanta Braves stadium casts a shadow over the Intrechment Creek watershed.

“Participating in the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network gave me the confidence to speak with water professionals at the One Water Summit in New Orleans and at River Rally in Grand Rapids.”



Donna is an outspoken environmental advocate for her community. She along with other Proctor Creek residents Juanita Wallace and Ruby Mitchell Harrison presented at the River Rally National Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in partnership with West Atlanta Watershed Alliance and the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council.



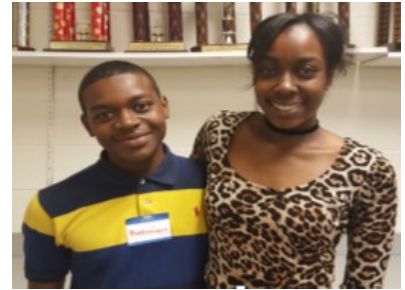
GROWING UP IN VINE CITY AND ENGLISH AVENUE

by Monkeshia Griffin, Community Resident, Advocate, and Mother

It is an honor to be a part of the changes going on in my community, especially when it come to the new “green Infrastructure”. I am an on-and-off-again resident of the Vine City and English Avenue communities. I remember when Magnolia Apartments were Eagan Homes and when the McDaniel-Glenn apartments were in Mechanicsville. Our neighborhood has its ups and downs like any other neighborhood in urban areas, but it seems as if Vine City and English Avenue were forgotten about. I am a mother of three kids and often hate the way our neighborhood has turned for the worse. In some areas, it looks like a scene from a scary movie in the 60s. Luckily, my kids and I met with an environmental scientist named Dr. Yomi and his peers and we are learning about our watershed and why we have so many floods, abandoned homes, mold and mildew, and asthma cases in our neighborhood. I didn’t know what to expect in the beginning, but after all of our meetings and information gathering, I feel like an “expert” when it comes to green infrastructure and parks and how they help to channel storm water runoff from downtown Atlanta into our already fragile neighborhood.

I plan to share my understanding of green infrastructure with others in the community and join in advocating for green infrastructure solutions Proctor Creek.

“Monkeshia and her children are exactly what this type of training is about. She is a resident that did not know about green infrastructure and now she not only knows about green infrastructure, but also the history of her community.” - Kelly Brown



*“I want to become an environmental engineer and ECO-Action and West Atlanta Watershed Alliance put me one step closer to my goals in life. I am thankful for these organizations that make the environment better and our community more sustainable.”
-Montavious Griffin (16)*



Montazja (12) wants to be a teacher and Edward (9) wants to be a rapper.



YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING THEIR OWN WAY AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Brandon Bryan and Dontavious Dean have teamed up to form D2DAW, an urban agriculture initiative focused on providing local foods, educating their community and eliminating food deserts. Not only can urban farms provided fresh, healthy foods, they can also act as green infrastructure, absorbing water that might otherwise end up in storm drains. Additional rainwater can be collected in rain barrels and stored until needed for crops.



FLOODING IN INTRENCHMENT & PROCTOR CREEK

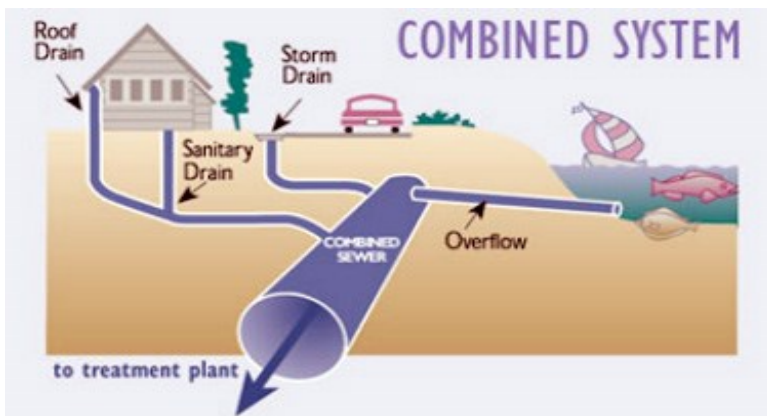
During heavy rain events, the city storm drains become overwhelmed by the large amounts of water. The drains are also clogged with litter and other debris which makes them even more inefficient. There just isn't enough room for all the water during large storms.



WHAT IS A COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW SYSEM?

In a combined sewer overflow (CSO) system, waste water from our sinks, showers and toilets mixes with water that is collected in storm drains along our roads. When there is a heavy rain storm, the system of pipes does not have enough space for all the water. The overflow comes back up through the storm drains and the combined sewer water runs into the community, spreading polluted water and creating health hazards for residents.

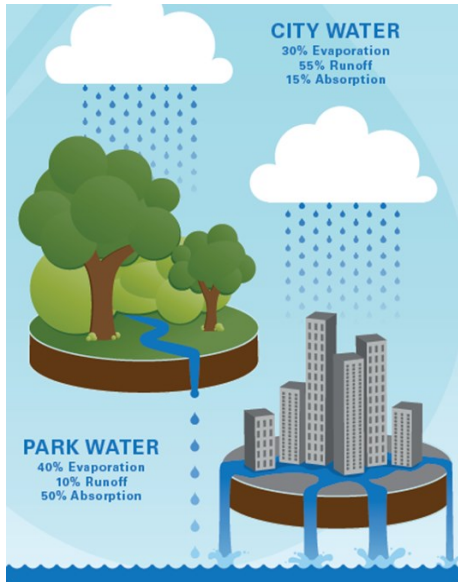
These CSO systems are found in more than 850 cities across the U.S. The City of Atlanta has separated much of the combined system and sewer overflows have been drastically reduced. Implementing green infrastructure reduces the volume of water going into the system and expands capacity of the system..



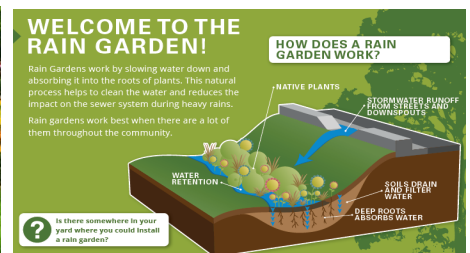
WARNING!
Signs like this one warn residents that our local waterway is not fit for use.

WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Green infrastructure uses soils and plants that absorb and clean the water, while reducing flooding. Parks and greenspaces can act as sponges for stormwater and provide places for kids to play and neighbors to gather.



Ponds | Raingardens | Dry Creek Beds | Permeable Pavers | Rainbarrels



PEOPLESTOWN PERSPECTIVE

By Sherise Brown, Resident & President of Stanton Park Tenant Association

My name is Sherise Brown. I am a resident of the Peoplestown community in Neighborhood Planning Unit-V. Community engagement is key, as is sharing ideas and working together on solutions to stop flooding in our communities and having a voice to advocate for green infrastructure. Investing in critical green infrastructure will serve our children and grandchildren well. By capturing rain water and preventing it from entering into the sewer system, it will help prevent flooding and displacement.



Presenting on green infrastructure solutions for Proctor and Intrenchment Creeks.



"Involving the youth was amazing!! You learn better and remember the lessons by being involved. This has been a valuable learning experience. I am community proud."

-Sherise Brown

PEOPLESTOWN COMMUNITY COALITION

By Columbus Ward, Resident, President of Peoplestown Revitalization Corporation and Vice-Chair NPU-V

Georgia State University is our neighbor, and unfortunately we don't have a real plan from their leaders including GSU's President Dr. Mark Becker and Carter's President, Scott Taylor. We need them to help us deal with equitable stormwater management in the redevelopment of Turner Field, particularly around flooding and green infrastructure. The Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan has recommended these sorts of investments, but they have not been incorporated into the plans presented by Georgia State University and Carter. Many developers in other parts of the county are embracing green stormwater infrastructure, so then why not our new neighbor? It's not too late to restructure their plans to incorporate what the LCI, the neighborhood, and American Rivers have been advocating for in our communities.



Columbus Ward advocating on behalf of the Peoplestown Community Coalition.

"All water flows into the ocean or into the purse of the rich."

-Danish Proverb



Advocates from the Peoplestown Community Coalition established a tent city outside of Turner Field to protest GSU's lack of responsiveness to concerns. Residents do not feel they are being heard, as their neighborhood once again undergoes major redevelopment.

"By developing in a way that's forward-looking and future-looking, we wouldn't have the flooding that we have in these communities right now."

-Jason Dozier



"My vision is educate communities on the connections humans share with water and the eco-system through nutritional guidance in a multi-disciplinary approach. My mission is to help people see the importance of nutrition, personal health, and our connection to the communal watershed."

-Jalani Traxler

PROCTOR CREEK STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

We envision a Proctor Creek that is clean, accessible, swimmable, and fishable. Our mission is to restore, revitalize, and protect the ecological health of the Proctor Creek Watershed Basin and the quality of life of all its people. Our goals include:

- Developing stewards who are strong and empowered leaders.
- Growing an educated and empowered community.
- Advocating for the fair treatment and inclusion of the underserved Proctor Creek communities .
- Collaborating with public and private partners.
- Serving the community as an interdisciplinary, scientific and technical collaborative.
- Influencing sustainable land use and water resource planning.



EVERYONE IS PART OF A WATERSHED!

By Erik Fyfe, Watershed Protection Specialist, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper



No matter where we are on the landscape, we are always connected to a watershed. The rain that flows off our rooftops, yards, and streets eventually makes its way downhill to the closest creek, river, or waterbody. The word watershed simply means all of the land that flows into a particular waterbody, and everyone is part of a watershed. Just as people depend on water for our own survival, our waterways depend on us for protection to stay healthy.

When water flows across the ground as runoff, it picks up all of the little “crumbs” that we leave behind in our day-to-day lives. Dropped candy wrappers, soap suds from washing our cars, motor oil drips, and silt from construction sites are all common things that we leave on the landscape that later wash into our creeks and rivers. Each of these contaminants on its own is typically not be enough to threaten a healthy river, but in a neighborhood or city, all of our small impacts concentrate together and wash downstream.

Stormwater runoff is considered one of the greatest threats to the health of our waterways, and the most difficult to manage because it collects and concentrates the many small pollutants from across a large landscape. Reducing this concentrated impact takes all of us to do our small part.

Use some of these tips to help give back to the streams and rivers that give us so much:

- Help keep pollutants from mixing with rainwater by picking up pet waste and litter, limiting use of lawn chemicals and fertilizers, and fixing oil drips from cars.
- Install a rain barrel, plant a tree, or redirect your downspout into a rain garden.
- Encourage neighbors to dispose of kitchen grease and wet wipes in the trash instead of down the drain.
- Organize a cleanup day in your neighborhood or creek.
- Protect stream buffers by leaving 25 feet on either side of creeks and streams for plants to grow and protect streambanks.
- Help collect water samples and learn about our waterways with your local watershed organization.
- Explore your local creek and get to know where it flows!

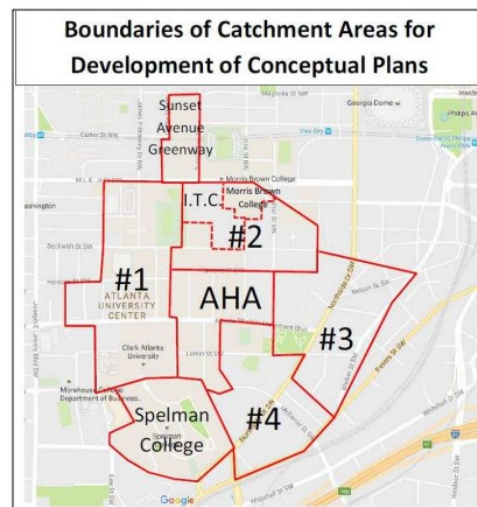
A STUDENT VIEW OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE AT THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER (AUC)

By Sydney Hubbert, Spelman University, Class of 2017, Bachelor in Environmental Science

Over the past two years a team of 27 students from the AUC Colleges in collaboration with ECO-Action, MAUWI, faculty and staff developed conceptual plans to capture stormwater from AUC campuses and surrounding areas and manage it before it drains into the downstream communities.

The purpose of the conceptual plans was to reduce pressure on our gray infrastructure and to prevent flooding and related public health issues in the downstream communities. When implemented, the conceptual plans will capture 40 million gallons of stormwater runoff from the AUC area.

After initially creating the conceptual plans for Spelman College, I led other students in the development of conceptual plans for the AUC and surrounding area.



Sydney Hubbert & Imani Love presenting their green infrastructure project plans

I recommend the implementation of the conceptual plans as a means to strengthen the AUC and surrounding community by providing an avenue to improve livability and resiliency. Furthermore, the conceptual plans should be used as a model for other colleges and universities to lessen the impact of climate change. More detail, including the

“Without the help of ECO-Action Green Infrastructure Advocacy training and the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network, I would not have realized my full potential, purpose, and passion for using my academic foundation to solve a real-world dilemma.” -Sydney Hubbert

FACILITATING COOPERATION IN THE AUC NEIGHBORHOODS

By Lyndon Greene, President of AUC Neighborhood Association and CEO of People United Foundation

When ECO-Action started the process of seeking cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders in the Atlanta University Center and its surroundings, Dr. Yomi reached out to Atlanta University Center Neighborhood Association through Rita Gibson of the ECO-District. He shared information about the conceptual plans to capture 40 million gallons of stormwater and about the desire to seek cooperation with Friendship Baptist Church.

Through a variety of community meetings, presentations and time spent building trust, these groups are now working in collaboration to design, implement, and advocate for green infrastructure that captures and manages stormwater on Atlanta University Center campus and surrounding properties, before the water can drain onto the downstream communities.

The impact of this development, as well as many others slated for the AUC and Westside communities is very consequential. It is absolutely essential that we foster and nurture both cooperation and collaboration among the many private and public stakeholders to encourage their buy-in and agreement, so that we can move forward in a manner that’s environmentally responsible and beneficial for us all.

NOT YOUR TYPICAL NERDS

by Ruby Mitchell-Harrison Resident, CEO of Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park, and Member of the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council

Friends of Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park is pleased to partner with ECO-Action and other grassroots community organizations to rally for solutions to environmental challenges that constantly plague our communities. Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park is located within the footprint of the Proctor Creek Watershed. By including our park in the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network, we are building our capacity and developing others who want to address the challenges of living, working and worshipping in and around the watershed.

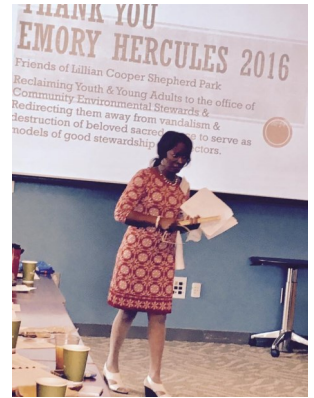
The Friends of Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park are not new to the challenges that plague our community. Our residents range from ages 0 to 100. We are actively involved with expectant mothers as well as our aging senior citizens and everyone in between. Proctor Creek and its tributaries flow through many of the residents' backyards including homes, as well as apartments, condos, town homes, trailers and single to multiple dwelling arrangements.

The Learning Network is helping us to forge ahead toward sustainable development and has given us the tools we need to identify challenges and meet the needs of our community. During this series, we have proposed possible ways to combat stormwater challenges with the use of green infrastructure, aiming to improve the following:

- o Exterior structural damage on homes
- o Daily water efficiency by households
- o Health disparities & safety concerns among residents
- o Environmental health concerns related to creek sanitation

Green infrastructure utilizes innovative design techniques which provides for infiltration, filter, store and reuse of stormwater. At the same time such processes remove pollutants, recharge groundwater, and provide protection for our bodies of water.

"If we think the stormwater and green infrastructure concerns are just about the blue and the green, we have sadly missed the mark. These issues must be people centered."- Ruby Mitchell-Harrison



Ruby presenting at the Emory HERCULES group on Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park and collecting samples in Proctor Creek .

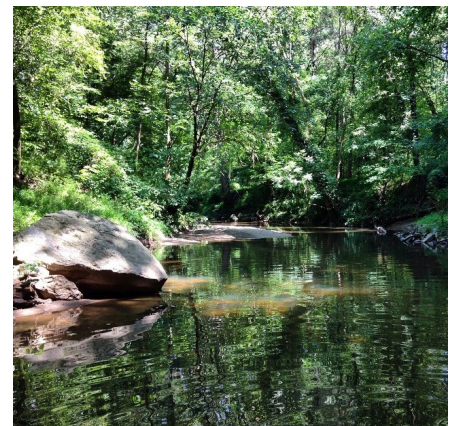


NATURAL BEAUTIES

Both watersheds have areas that look more like the north Georgia mountains than the city of Atlanta. We can work together to restore these important natural spaces.



INTRENCHMENT CREEK



PROCTOR CREEK

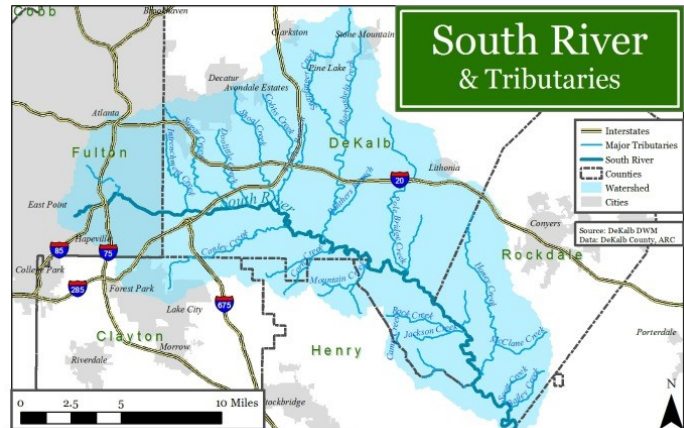
CONNECTING OUR WATERS

by Chris Lemons, Resident and President of the Peopletown Neighborhood Association

Intrenchment Creek is a bit of a conundrum for the east side of Atlanta. The creek begins along Glenwood Avenue and continues south along Moreland Avenue until it gets to the Key Road Water Treatment Station. The water is then treated before it flows into the South River at Constitution Lakes Park in DeKalb County.

Some sections of Intrenchment Creek are very polluted. The creek flows near car washes, tire shops, and gas station. To compound the problem the corridor around the creek suffers from illegal dumping. This is part of the reason why the water has to be treated at the Key Road Station.

Intrenchment Creek is a part of the Ocmulgee River basin. Intrenchment Creek flows into the South River, then to the Yellow River near Conyers. The converging systems combine with the Alcovy River at Lake Jackson in Butts County. The Lake flows out to the Ocmulgee River towards Macon, Georgia. It then meets up with the Altamaha River in Montgomery County and finally flows out into the Atlantic Ocean near Brunswick, Georgia. The impact of what happens here in Atlanta can be felt some 300 miles away.



Intrenchment Creek is part of the South River and the Ocmulgee River Basin

“Community residents are the ones that live with these challenges. We must be at the table, as full participants to address these issues head on, and find sustainable solutions. We need to understand the history of Proctor Creek and the benefits of green infrastructure to make informed decisions about our future.” -Tony Torrence

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TOURS

Partners from both Proctor Creek and Intrenchment Creek have been participating in a variety of tours focused on stormwater runoff and implementation of green infrastructure as a means to reduce flooding. These tours have been hosted by Community Improvement Association, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, and the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council.



MY LEARNING JOURNEY

by Juanita Wallace, Community Resident and Member of the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council



“My story began as a kid playing in the creek, when we used to get crawfish out of the creek to eat. The creek was healthy and that’s what I want to see again.”



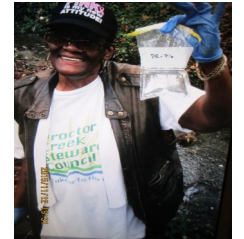
Juanita is very active in her community, as both a student of the environment and as a community educator.

- She has worked with US Fish & Wildlife Services, learning to identify macroinvertebrates and other species.
- She has spoken at Clark Atlanta University and River Network’s National River Rally Conference on the importance of a healthy creek for a healthy community.
- She shares knowledge with residents young and old at local community events as a Proctor Creek Steward.
- She participates in volunteer events that improve her neighborhood, such as installing plants in a large rain garden at Lindsay Street Park and participating in neighborhood cleanups.

As a lifelong resident of Proctor Creek, the health of the creek is very important to me. Today, the creek is too polluted to eat from or for our kids to play in. I joined the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council and the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network in order to learn more about my environment, but also so that I could share with others.

I’ve learned how I can enhance the community by engaging in the development of green infrastructure. I’ve learned how to use MASK, which is Motivation, Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge to inform and educate others on how important it is to live in a safe and healthy environment. I’m learning about water quality testing and how to read river maps. I am also learning to ask questions and how to advocate for my creek and my community.

I want to be a role model for my community in the enhancement and development of a healthy watershed and clean environment.



Mrs. Wallace catching and identifying species in Proctor Creek, including a crawfish and turtle; also taking water quality samples.

Citizen Scientist in Action!



Mrs. Wallace receiving her certificate of participation from biologists at US Fish & Wildlife Service.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

by Jenny Hoffner, VP of Conservation Strategies, American Rivers

When a community group seeks to work with a government agency, it can be challenging to determine how best to go about it. Government agencies big and small and at all levels of government have important resources and can be important partners, but they also have protocols and policies that can serve as barriers to connecting with them. Often, it's hard to know how to engage with them. Here are three suggestions for approaching the work:



Spend some time getting to know the people in the agency, so you can find your allies. Ask partner groups, friends and neighbors whether they have contacts at the agency. Reach out to contacts at the agency and set up in-person meetings to begin to develop relationships and build trust with people inside the agency. It may take some time, but eventually you may find the allies you are looking for.

Try to see things from their perspectives. Put yourself in their shoes to try to understand the challenges they face in advancing certain initiatives.

- Do they care about public opinion? Do they need a project or plan to move forward with the agreement of stakeholders? You can be a valued ally if you can mobilize a constituency to support mutual goals.
- Do they need to demonstrate compliance with laws or permits? Your project might be able to support environmental compliance or other agency requirements.
- Do they want to be seen as a good public actor? Are they on record stating certain goals for their agency or city? For example, Mayor Reed stated that he wanted the City of Atlanta to be a top-tier sustainable city. Using this frame, the Green Infrastructure Task Force created the Green Infrastructure Action Plan and has advanced many related initiatives.

Find areas of overlapping goals and objectives, and identify how your work/ project can be a resource to them.

- Prioritize and pursue those areas of agreement. Where you have overlapping goals/projects/objectives, pursue those collaboratively.
- Consider working with allies to set up processes that will ensure your opportunity for ongoing participation, not just one-time public input.
- Set some things aside and agree to disagree. In areas where you disagree, agree to pursue them separately and amicably while you pursue your common goals together.
- Caution! Be strategic about your work in areas where you disagree with agency partners. Recognize that this work could conflict with your collective work. One strategy is to consider different messengers for certain issues.

What does a park have to do with stormwater flooding? A lot if you build it correctly! Parks can provide soils that absorb and filter polluted stormwater, keeping it out of yards, homes, and businesses and putting it back into the ground to recharge our water supplies.

THE PROCTOR NORTH AVENUE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION PLAN

By Andrew White, Director of Park Visioning, Park Pride

Completed in 2010, the plan grew out of the community's efforts to address the issues of stormwater flooding in the English Avenue and Vine City neighborhoods. Called the "PNA Study" for short, the study's goal was to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Proctor Creek Watershed Basin and propose a series of greenspace improvements and new parks that would provide relief for the combined sewer system that often overflowed into the neighborhood streets, in addition to bringing more parks to this under-parked community.

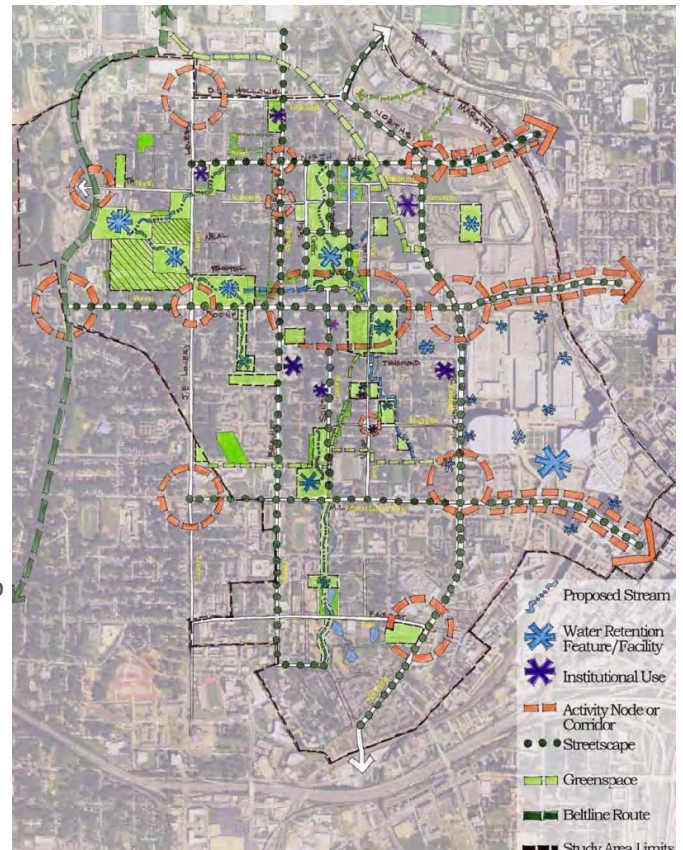
The PNA Study proposed new parks, greenspaces and greenways that reclaims abandoned/derelict (and low lying) properties. It also provides a roadmap to cleaner surface and ground water and reduces flooding through the incorporation of green infrastructure in parks and green streets.

All of these revitalization efforts have positive implications not only for the families that live within the boundaries of the Proctor Creek Watershed, but for business development and jobs for neighborhood residents as well.

Our amazing project partners for both the PNA Study and the effort to bring it to fruition include: West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan Atlanta Urban Watershed Institute, Community Improvement Association, The Conservation Fund, ECO-Action, American Rivers, Eberly & Associates, Perkins+Will, The City of Atlanta, and most importantly the communities within the Proctor Creek Watershed.

Since the PNA Study was completed, Lindsay Street Park has been built and green infrastructure has been added to Vine City Park. Additionally, Boone Park West and Cook Park, both identified as potential parks in the PNA Study, are getting closer to construction every day! The PNA Study is coming to life, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for the communities that will benefit from the stormwater management provided by these greenspaces.

Andrew White with State Representative and English Avenue resident 'Able' Mable Thomas. In 2009, it was Rep. Thomas who was the first to reach out to Park Pride and ask how parks could help prevent stormwater flooding in her community. And that's how the PNA Study started!



VINE CITY PARK—EXPANDED IN 2016

An area that was once prone to flooding has been transformed into a green infrastructure park. The large raingarden, dry creek channels, and new trees collect stormwater from the adjacent streets. This reduces the amount of water going into the combined sewer system and decreases area flooding. The park was designed in partnership with area residents and included workforce training opportunities for community members.



Vine City Park, before and after green infrastructure



WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

by Shannon Lee, Urban Conservation Manager, The Conservation Fund



Working in collaboration with residents, the City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation Department and a variety of partners, The Conservation Fund is working with residents to create parks that provide a variety of benefits to local communities. Through our **Parks With Purpose** program, we help restore our inner city neighborhoods by building parks that protect our environment and reconnect us to nature, while also capturing stormwater, creating employment and educational opportunities and supporting the residents who call these communities home.

In 2015, we celebrated the opening of Lindsay Street Park, the first park for the English Avenue neighborhood. In 2016, we partnered with Park Pride to expand Vine City Park to double its size. We are currently working to build Boone Park West, which will open in 2018. Each of these parks provide much needed greenspace, but most importantly they were envisioned, planned and designed through a process that ensured residents led the way.

These three parks are located in the headwaters of Proctor Creek, in the English Avenue and Vine City communities. These Westside neighborhoods experience significant stormwater flooding during heavy rain events. Like many other inner city communities across the country, these areas have a combined sewer system that sends polluted water and raw sewage into these neighborhoods during heavy rains. These new parks all include “green infrastructure” such as rain gardens and bioswales. These features funnel stormwater from the streets and into the parks where water can be absorbed by the soils instead of overwhelming the sewer system. This reduces localized flooding and helps prevent sewer overflows.

The Conservation Fund is committed to community-driven projects and values the expertise that residents bring to the table. Without committed neighbors and grassroots organizations who support these projects, these parks will not provide lasting solutions. We believe the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network is leading the way in engaging residents around stormwater issues and developing community advocates who will ensure that green infrastructure becomes part of the standard for inner city neighborhood revitalization efforts.

LINDSAY STREET PARK OPENED IN 2015

Working in partnership with residents and grassroots organizations such as Community Improvement Association and the English Avenue Neighborhood Association, The Conservation Fund led the charge to create Lindsay Street Park, the very first park for the English Avenue neighborhood. This *Parks With Purpose* project not only converted vacant lots into a park that includes green infrastructure, but also provided multiple workforce training options and a variety of environmental education programs.



***Winner of Environmental Protection Agency's 2016 Rain Catcher Award
and American Planning Association's Award for Excellence in Sustainability***

BOONE PARK WEST - OPENING FALL 2018

This community driven project will include green infrastructure features that address area stormwater impacts and replenish groundwater, while providing a safe place for kids to play and residents to gather. The new park will reclaim long-neglected urban properties and transform them into a vibrant public park that provides multiple environmental, economic and social benefits.

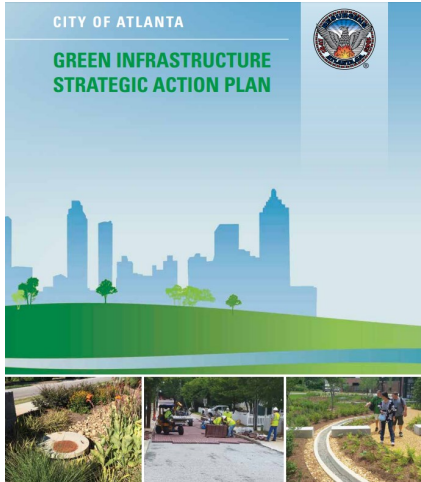
The park design includes green infrastructure that will capture over 7 million gallons of stormwater per year. Features includes underground infiltration, a rain garden and street side stormwater planters.



Supported by Park Pride and The Conservation Fund, a resident led steering committee provided community-wide outreach activities, ensuring neighbors were informed and included throughout the planning process.



CITY OF ATLANTA GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN



The Department of Watershed Management has recently updated the Post-Development Stormwater Management Ordinance to promote the use of Green Infrastructure on new and redevelopment projects in the City. This has resulted in more than 9,100 installations of green infrastructure on private property to date.



The City has also been investing in green infrastructure projects on public property, including a five-million gallon storage vault near Turner Field, more than four miles of permeable pavers and 35 stormwater planters in the Intrenchment Creek neighborhoods.



Boone Green Street under construction.
A recent rain highlights the need for this project. The green street project combined with Rodney Cook Park and Boone Park West should greatly reduce flooding risks in the area.

In Proctor Creek, the City is currently working to install 40 stormwater planters along Joseph Boone Blvd., as part of a 'green street' makeover that includes new bike lanes and streetscaping.

Also along Boone Blvd., Department of Watershed Management and the Parks and Recreation Department are partnering with Trust for Public Land and National Monuments Foundation to build Rodney Cook, Sr. Park. This new greenspace will capture up to 37 million gallons of runoff per year and slowly release it into the sewer system.



Rodney Cook Sr. Park, Coming 2018

CITY OF ATLANTA CARE AND CONSERVE

The City of Atlanta recognizes that there are times when families and individuals face financial hardships and need help paying for essential services like water. The City offers financial assistance to low-income ratepayers who are having difficulty paying water and sewer bills through an innovative program called Care & Conserve. Customers seeking assistance with water should call our Care & Conserve hotline at 404-546-3620.

You can help prevent localized flooding by keeping storm drains clear of debris. Things that can clog drains include:

- Trash, litter and debris
- Leaves - please bag your yard waste!
- Fats, oils, and grease
- Wet wipes, even ones labeled flushable



TAKE THE PLEDGE
Keep your wipes out of our pipes!
#NoWipesInPipes

WEST ATLANTA WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Since its inception in 1995, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA) has partnered with residents in the Proctor Creek, Utoy Creek and Sandy Creek watershed communities to fight for environmental justice and to build a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable West Atlanta.

We also seek to educate the public about environmental issues affecting our community and engage them in restoring, protecting and advocating for their local waterways. We believe that a healthy environment equals a healthy community.

In partnership with the City of Atlanta Parks Department, WAWA manages the Outdoor Activity Center. Located in a 26-acre old growth forest, the Center provides indoor and outdoor classroom space for a range of educational programs, including interpretive hikes, school field trips, and outreach programs such as the Great American Backyard Campout and the Atlanta Science Festival.

*“Proctor Creek used to be a source of pride for our community - a place where children played, where people could fish, and where people were baptized.”
- Na’Taki Osborne Jelks*

EPA: FEDERAL URBAN WATERS PROGRAM

Led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Urban Waters Federal Partnership reconnects urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.

Proctor Creek was designated an Urban Waters location in 2013. Since that time, the Urban Waters team has collaborated with a variety of groups in Proctor Creek, providing funding and technical support to non-profits working throughout the watershed. This has included support for the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network; the AUC Green Infrastructure Concept Plans; the Boone Park West Vision Plan; and the Proctor Creek Ambassador, a position held by Darryl Haddock in partnership with WAWA.



(Above) WAWA Board Chair Na’Taki Osborne Jelks speaking with former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy.

(Left) Darryl Haddock, WAWA’s Education Specialist and EPA Proctor Creek Ambassador, with EPA Staff members Connie Alexander and Cynthia Edwards.

Our Mission

ECO-Action's mission is to promote a safe and healthy environment by helping communities organize to address environmental health hazards.

ECO-Action serves the general population, but we focus our assistance on vulnerable communities – people with limited formal education, those with few resources, women, and people of color. ECO-Action's work is based on the intersection of three things – threats to human health, environmental degradation and social injustice. We envision a toxics-free Georgia where people's health is not affected by environmental threats.

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ATLANTA WATERSHED LEARNING NETWORK What you want to know but you don't want to ask because you think you know!

By Dr. Yomi Noibi, Executive Director, ECO-Action

In the past few years, ECO-Action has collaborated with American Rivers, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, The Conservation Fund, Park Pride, Community Improvement Association and Metro Atlanta Urban Watershed Institute to build capacity and develop leadership for green infrastructure in the Intrenchment and Proctor Creek watersheds communities. This work has evolved and led to the creation of Atlanta Watershed Learning Network.

The Learning Network is about building equitable relationships between residents of Atlanta watershed communities and private and public stakeholders. We are building a learning community in which people at all levels, individually and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity (power) and getting the results they really care about.

What do we really care about?

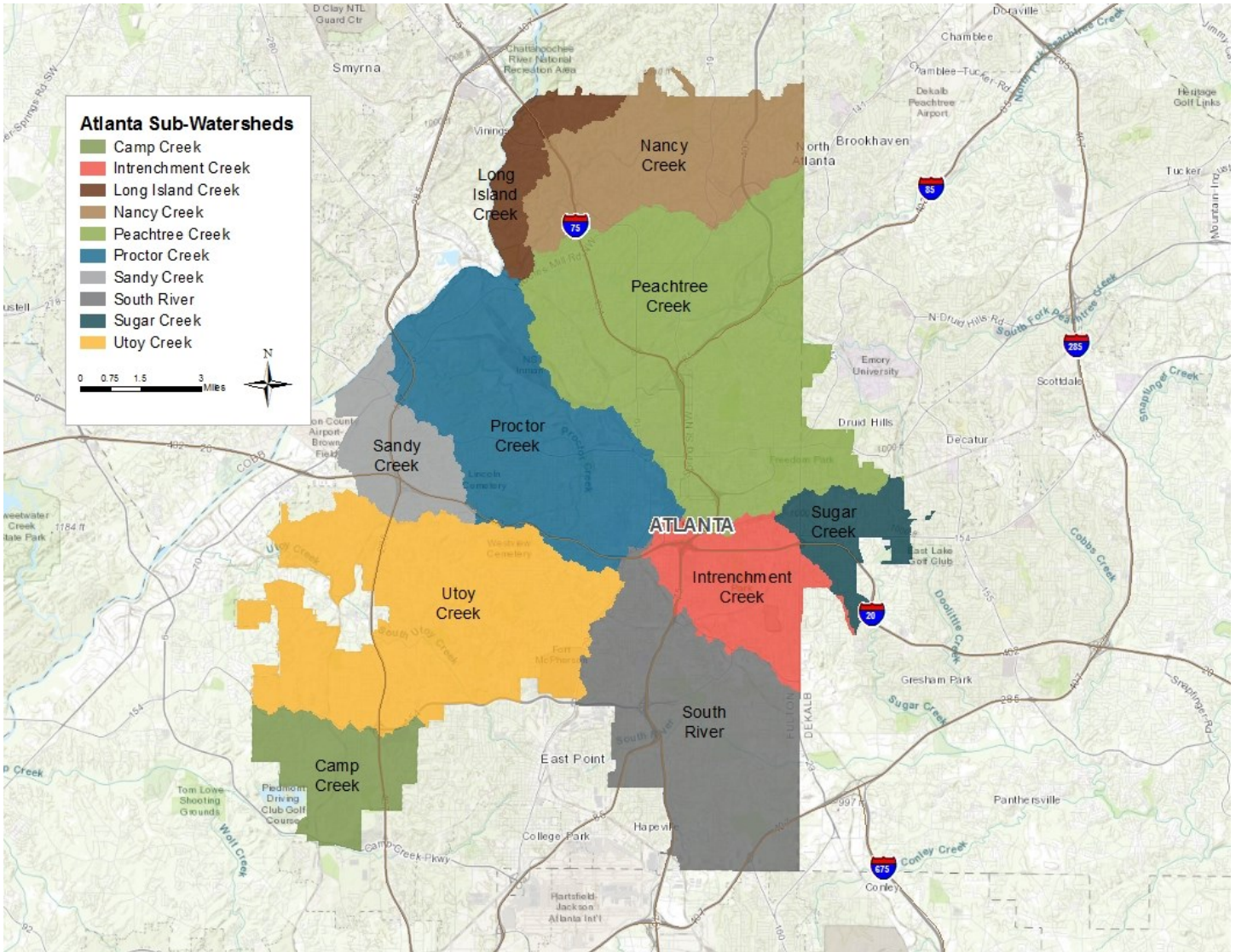
- 1) Restoring and protecting the ecological health of Atlanta watersheds starting with Intrenchment Creek and Proctor Creek.
- 2) Creating conditions and opportunities to improve the quality of life of residents of Atlanta watersheds.
- 3) Facilitating equitable relationships between community stakeholders (public and private) that nurture cooperation, collaboration, and partnership for projects that utilize green infrastructure to address flooding.
- 4) Organizing and advocating for an environment where every watershed is resilient to climate change.
- 5) Promoting City of Atlanta Watershed programs that make a difference and advocate for a change of programs that do not provide sustainable solutions to water quality issues in Atlanta.
- 6) Growing a learning community where members unlearn what does not work and learn about problem-solving for water quality and stormwater issues from an holistic, sustainable, and resilient perspectives.

The Atlanta Watershed Learning Network's collective purpose is to:

- Grow stewards and advocates from Intrenchment and Proctor Creek watersheds communities who will provide leadership for the protection and restoration of the watersheds.
- Address flooding and stormwater issues using green infrastructure.
- Provide opportunities for improved health, recreation and education.
- Protect, improve and restore the health of the watersheds for all.



CITY OF ATLANTA SUB-WATERSHEDS



Atlanta Watershed Learning Network participants receiving their certificates of completion!

A variety of partners and supporters have helped to create the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network.



THE CONSERVATION FUND



- 2017 -

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