

The Alabama Clean Water Partnership

Homepage:

www.adem.state.al.us/EnviroProtect/WatershedMan/watman/cleanwat/manplan.htm

The Alabama Clean Water Partnership Project is a coordinated effort of public and private stakeholders to restore and protect the state's river basins in accordance with the goals of the Clean Water Act. The national Clean Water Action Plan, announced in February 1998 and coordinated in the state of Alabama by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, encourages the involvement of local citizens to address the protection and restoration of our nation's water resources. One key action in this plan is to use a watershed management approach to safeguard water quality. Clean Water Partnership facilitators have been identified to carry out this process, coordinating activities in the Coosa, Black Warrior, Tallapoosa, Cahaba, Alabama-Tombigbee, Tennessee, Chattahoochee/Choctawhatchee/Chipola/Upper Perdido-Escambia, and Coastal basins.

Communities, agricultural interests and industries are being forced to comply with ever increasing environmental regulations, including Storm Water Phase II permitting, Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) regulations, source water assessment and protection, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting, State Indirect Discharge (SID) permitting, and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Each community and industry has unique needs and requirements and is working independently to meet those needs. The partnership approach enables groups to develop collaborative programs that meet multiple needs, eliminate duplication of tasks, and allow for effective and efficient use of available resources. Through the Clean Water Partnership Project, watershed management plans for Alabama's rivers will be developed and implemented. Participation in the Partnership allows community-based groups, units of government, industry, special interest groups, and individuals to pull together available resources to develop and implement programs that address and meet the needs of diverse interests more efficiently and cost-effectively.

A steering committee, comprised of stakeholders representing basin-wide interests, has been created within each river basin to facilitate communication and the exchange of information, and to provide vision for the protection and restoration of Alabama's rivers. The basin-wide approach is important to ensure that individual efforts are in accord with one another. The river basin is further defined into smaller geographical areas from dam to dam, or by river section. For each river section, one local entity (government, nonprofit organization, public utility, or industry) that is willing to coordinate efforts within the river section and that is eligible to receive public and/or private funding will take a lead role. Local stakeholders, representing diverse interests, will participate by serving on a River Section Stakeholder Committee. The purpose of the stakeholder committee is to identify and rank potential projects within the watershed, oversee the development of a watershed management plan and pursue the implementation of watershed restoration action strategies (WRASs), as defined by the Clean Water Action Plan. Representative interests on the stakeholder committees might include agricultural, local and state government, forestry, public health, utilities, environmental, industry, economic developers, recreational, educational, and regulatory.

Expected basin-wide benefits of the Alabama Clean Water Partnership include

Improved Communication to promote information sharing, broad awareness of resource availability, and networking with others facing the same challenges.

Data and Information Consolidation through the creation of a communications and technical assistance network so that a more complete account of each river's water quality is available.

Improved Coordination between community-based groups, municipalities, and industries to prevent the duplication of some efforts and to streamline the use of limited resources.

Opportunity for Collaboration in decision-making and implementation of watershed management projects.

Clean Water Partnership Contacts

Black Warrior River Basin

Contact: Kellie Johnston (205) 251-7739 x 121, warriorcwp@hotmail.com

Coosa River Basin

Contact: Sabra Sutton (334) 271-1444, ssutton@ch2m.com