

Southeastern Water Pollution Biologists Association

*“Isle Style”
Biloxi, Mississippi
November 7-10, 2005*

2005 Summer Newsletter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's letter	3
Registration form	4
T-shirts	5
Abstract form	7
Hotel reservations	8
Awards	9
Meeting agenda	11
Alabama Update	12
Georgia Update	16

Updates from other states were included in the previous newsletter.

Updates from Tennessee and Florida unavailable.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fellow SWPBA Members:

Now that summer is upon us, I know everyone is really busy. The Annual Meeting Information is contained within this issue of the newsletter. This year's SWPBA Meeting will be held in Biloxi, Mississippi, November 8-10, 2005. Pre-meeting workshops will be held on Monday November 7. The host hotel is the Isle of Capri Biloxi, and the meeting will be held at the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center, right next door to the host hotel. The rate at the Isle of Capri is \$62.00 per night, plus tax. A catered welcome reception is planned for Monday night at the casino.

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER THE CALL FOR PAPERS AND THE CALL FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING.

Please begin to send in your abstracts, registration forms, t-shirt orders and let me know if you are planning to attend the TALU or the Large Rivers Workshops as soon as possible so that we can make adequate preparations for your trip to Biloxi - - -we don't want to run out of "preservative"!

Thus far, suggested topics for presentations are Wadeable Streams Assessment Projects; QA/QC; and estuarine/marine monitoring programs.

We have confirmed that Dr. Joe Flotemersch (US EPA ORD Cincinnati, OH) will present a classroom and field demonstration workshop on large river sampling. This workshop will be a pre-meeting workshop held all day Monday November 7th. It will include classroom instruction in the morning, followed by a field exercise to a local stream that afternoon.

Also that day (Monday November 7th), Jim Harrison will present at TALU update workshop that afternoon.

Something new and exciting: Thanks to EPA Region IV Ecological Assessment Branch, we will initiate two annual awards at this year's SWPBA Meeting. The awards are entitled "The SWPBA Lifetime Achievement Award" and the "SWPBA Biologist of the Year Award". Nomination procedures and criteria are presented later in the newsletter, so begin thinking about worthy recipients for these awards.

I look forward to seeing you in Biloxi,

Mike Beiser
SWPBA President, 2005

2005 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
Southeastern Water *P*ollution *B*iologists Association

Biloxi, Mississippi
November 7-10, 2005

REGISTRATION FORM

Name:	
Agency:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Registration Fee:	Qty:	@ \$50.00	= \$	
(banquet included)				
T-Shirts:	Qty:	@ \$13.00	= \$	
Size S-XL				
Size XXL and above	Qty:	@ \$14.00	= \$	

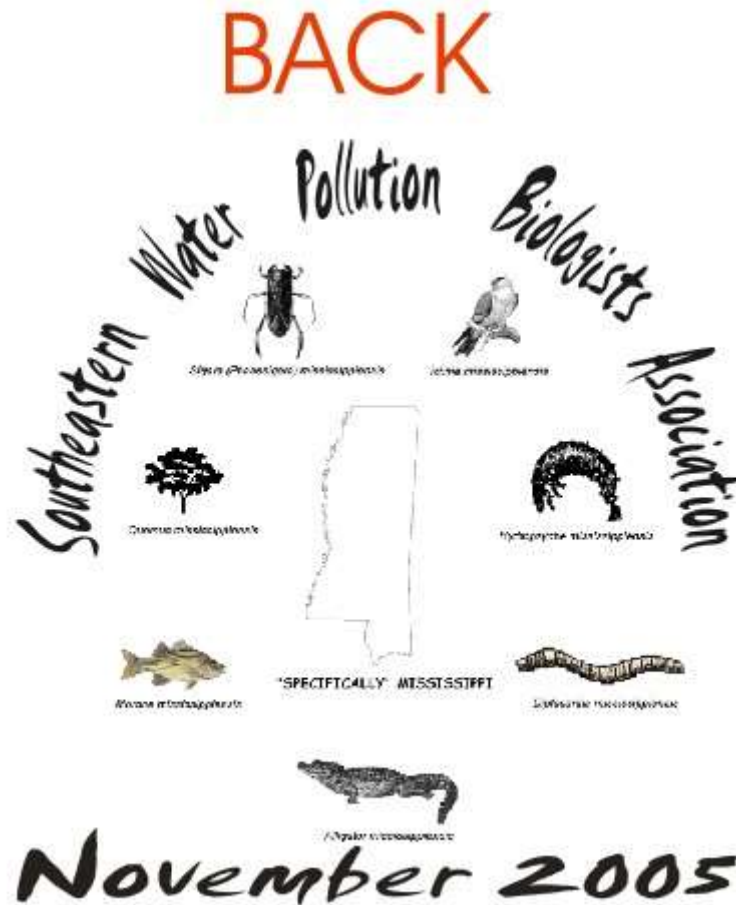
T-Shirts (size and quantity)

	S	
	M	
	L	
	XL	
	XXL	

**Please make checks payable to Mike Beiser and send along with registration form to: Ann-Marie Denman
2142 Jackson Avenue West
Oxford, Mississippi 38655**

SWPBA T-SHIRTS

Prepaid orders are required for t-shirts. Please submit your t-shirt order using the registration form provided by September 23, 2005. The color of the t-shirts is leaf green and the writing is cream. They only come in short-sleeves.



HEART



SLEEVE



If you would like to present a talk or poster, please fill out the form below and return it via e-mail (Ann-Marie_Denman@deq.state.ms.us). Suggested session topics include quality assurance and wadeable streams assessment.

SWPBA ABSTRACT FORMS

Don't forget to complete the equipment sections so we will be able to plan for all requirements.

NAME OF PAPER title continued	
Presenters	
State or Department Name	
Please leave this section blank	
ABSTRACT This section is formatted to 10-point type that will allow a 12 line description (175 - 200 words).	
TYPE OF PRESENTATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Oral <input type="checkbox"/> Poster Session	
LIST EQUIPMENT REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/> Slide Projector <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Projector <input type="checkbox"/> 98 Powerpoint Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> XP Powerpoint Presentation	OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

The host hotel is the Isle of Capri Casino located at 151 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, MS. The rate is \$62.00 plus tax per night, single or double occupancy. Reservations must be made by October 7, 2005 to be guaranteed a block. The room block is good November 6-10 (Sunday through Thursday). You can make your reservations by calling 1-866-475-3847. Let them know that you are with the Southeastern Water Pollution Biologists Association when making your reservation.

“SWPBA Biologist of the Year” Award

Overview of the Award

Sponsored each year by the EPA Region 4 Ecological Assessment Branch in Athens, GA, the “SWPBA Biologist of the Year” award recognizes the innovative work of a front line Region 4 State biologist. The Executive Committee of the Southeastern Water Pollution Biologist Association (SWPBA) will review the nominations and select the recipient. The “Biologist of the Year” award winner will receive a beautiful plaque from the EPA at the annual SWPBA meeting. An additional “rotating” plaque that lists the recipient’s name along with previous winners will be presented to their agency for display during the following year.

The Nomination Process

Each SWPBA member state and tribe may nominate up to two (2) biologists for consideration by the SWPBA Executive Committee. Names of the nominees for the award will be kept confidential by the Executive Committee. The SWPBA primary contact(s) for each member state or tribe are responsible for coordinating the nominating process in a manner that best suits their organization. The SWPBA President may be consulted at any time concerning the nomination process, and at his/her discretion may ask the Executive Committee for clarifications or rulings on the conduct of the nomination and selection process. The intent of SWPBA is to keep the process as fair and uncomplicated as possible so that the award ceremony will be both enjoyable and a point of pride for SWPBA and its members.

The Nomination Timeline and Narrative

Nominations must be sent by the appropriate primary contact(s) via e-mail or letter to the SWPBA President by September 15th in order to provide enough time for review and selection by the Executive Committee. The nomination narrative is limited to one page and must include the nominee’s name and organization, the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the individual initiating the nomination, and a description of the nominee’s work with a focus on the criteria discussed in the following paragraph.

Award Eligibility and Criteria

The nominee must be a SWPBA Member and a full time employee of a SWPBA member state or tribe to be eligible for the award. Also, it is the intent of this award to recognize state/tribal biologists for work that is currently underway or recently completed. The criteria for selection will include factors such as the innovative nature of the work, the level of complexity, the potential for widespread application of the findings, the level of collaboration with other states/tribes/agencies, and the individual leadership demonstrated by the biologist in their respective program. Questions concerning the award or the nomination process may be directed to the SWPBA President.

“SWPBA Lifetime Achievement” Award

Overview of the Award

Sponsored each year by the EPA Region 4 Ecological Assessment Branch in Athens, GA, the “SWPBA Lifetime Achievement” award recognizes the long-term achievements and contributions of a member biologist (state, tribal or federal) to the science of water pollution biology. The Executive Committee of the Southeastern Water Pollution Biologist Association (SWPBA) will review the nominations and select the recipient. The “SWPBA Lifetime Achievement” award winner will receive a beautiful plaque from the EPA at the annual SWPBA meeting. An additional “rotating” plaque that lists the recipient’s name along with previous winners will be presented to their agency for display during the following year.

The Nomination Process

Each SWPBA member state, tribe or EPA Region IV may nominate one (1) biologist for consideration by the SWPBA Executive Committee. Names of the nominees for this award will be kept confidential by the Executive Committee. The SWPBA primary contact(s) for each member state, tribe or EPA Region IV are responsible for coordinating the nominating process in a manner that best suits their organization. The SWPBA President may be consulted at any time concerning the nomination process, and at his/her discretion may ask the Executive Committee for clarifications or rulings on the conduct of the nomination and selection process. The intent of SWPBA is to keep the process as fair and uncomplicated as possible so that the award ceremony will be both enjoyable and a point of pride for SWPBA and its members.

The Nomination Timeline and Narrative

Nominations must be sent by the appropriate primary contact(s) via e-mail or letter to the SWPBA President by September 15th in order to provide enough time for review and selection by the Executive Committee. The nomination narrative is limited to three pages and must include the nominee’s name and organization, the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the individual initiating the nomination, a biographical sketch of the nominee’s scientific career, a description of the nominee’s work with a focus on the criteria discussed in the following paragraph, and at least two (2) letters of support from other water pollution biologists.

Award Eligibility and Criteria

The nominee must be a SWPBA Member and a full time employee of a SWPBA member state, tribe, or EPA Region IV, with at least 12 years of experience with a member state, tribe, or EPA Region IV, to be eligible for the award. It is the intent of this award to recognize state/tribal/Region IV biologists who have made significant and long-term contributions to water pollution biology. The criteria for selection will include factors such as the innovative nature of the work, the level of complexity, the potential for widespread application of the findings, the level of collaboration with other states/tribes/agencies, and the individual leadership demonstrated by the biologist in their respective program. Questions concerning the award or the nomination process may be directed to the SWPBA President.

MEETING AGENDA

The following is a preliminary agenda:

Monday, November 7: Pre-meeting workshops

1. Large river sampling workshop conducted by Dr. Joseph Flotemersch, US EPA ORD Cincinnati (classroom in the a.m., field in the p.m.)
2. TALU workshop conducted by Jim Harrison, US EPA Atlanta (classroom in the p.m.)

Reception—"Isle Style" at the casino/hotel

Tuesday, November 8: SWPBA meeting day 1

Plenary session
Other sessions
Hospitality room

Wednesday, November 9: SWPBA meeting day 2

Other sessions (afternoon session to end between 4-5 p.m.)
Poster session (at J.L. Scott Marine Education Center prior to banquet)
Banquet
Hospitality room

Thursday, November 10:

Final session
Business meeting

NEWS FROM ALABAMA

Fish Tissue Monitoring Program (FTMP)

FTMP FY2005: During the 3rd quarter FY2005 a tentative list of FY2006 FTMP sample sites was compiled, this list includes:

- Three Mile Creek (TMC1 and TMC2) for chlordane.
- Burnt Corn Creek: verification of FY2005 exceedance.
- Focus basin: All non-wadeable public water supply waterbodies.
- Focus basin: minimum of 10 locations.
- FDA exceedance sites: minimum of five sites.
- South Alabama: minimum of 5 sites not recently assessed.
- South Alabama: minimum of 5 sites not previously collected.
- Dioxin: collect samples below minimum of 3 paper mills.
- Dioxin: Perdido River/Bay, downstream and upstream of Eleven Mile Creek.
- Weeks Bay Reserve study sites: fish exceeding 1.0 ppm mercury:
 - Magnolia River Watershed
 - Baldwin Co Rd 49 Bridge.
 - Fish River Watershed
 - Baldwin Co Rd 32.
 - Polecat Creek.
 - Cowpen Creek.
 - I-110 Fish River.
 - Bay Branch at US 90.
 - Fish River around US 90.
- Dr. Sass request: Cedar and Dunham Creeks for PCB's in south Alabama near Dothan.
- Dr. Sass request: Theodore ship canal.
- Bilbo Creek watershed: fish tissue samples for mercury analysis.

Requests for FTMP data and information were processed for ADEM Public Affairs, ADPH, Geological Survey of Alabama, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Gradient Corporation, and private citizens (multiple requests).

Point / Nonpoint Source Assessment Programs (PSAP / NPASP)

2003 Basinwide NPS Assessment: A first draft of the 2003 NPS Basinwide Screening Assessment Report has been completed and is undergoing internal review.

2004 Basinwide NPS Assessments: Macroinvertebrate ID QA in progress. Chironomidae ID QA has been completed as of April 26, 2005.

2004 CWA §303(d)/TMDL Monitoring: Habitat and biological conditions were assessed at 28 locations to provide data for ADEM's §303(d) Monitoring Program. Final habitat and MB-EPT

macroinvertebrate assessments have been completed. Intensive macroinvertebrate and periphyton bioassessments were conducted at the remaining 20 stream segments to verify impairment from nutrient enrichment and measure the extent of that impairment. Reports summarizing final assessment results have been completed for all waterbodies. Macroinvertebrate data have been entered in ADEM's MACINV Pace Database

2004 Reference Reach Monitoring: Assessment guidelines for each of ADEM's intensive- and screening-level assessment methods are developed from data collected from a network of least-impaired ecoregional reference reaches. Screening- and intensive-level macroinvertebrate assessments and periphyton bioassessments were conducted at 20 ecoregional reference reaches. All samples have been identified and QAs are in progress.

Periphyton Bioassessment Program: ADEM's Periphyton Bioassessment Program was initiated following a 2002 104(b)3 grant from USEPA Region IV Atlanta. The purpose of the project was to test the ability of three bioassessment methods to document impairment from nutrient enrichment. As part of the project, protocols and sampling equipment were developed or made, staff were trained to conduct assessments using these protocols, and data were analyzed. All data collected during 2002 have been analyzed and reported to USEPA Region IV. A final report was sent to USEPA Region IV. Based on analysis of periphyton data collected during 2002 and 2004 and comments and feedback from Dr. Jan Stevenson, a periphyton bioassessment specialist, ADEM revised its periphyton bioassessment protocols. ADEM received an extension on the grant in 2005 to use remaining funds towards revising its periphyton bioassessment protocols and training personnel to use these protocols during the 2005 ACT Basin Assessment and at CWA §303(d) streams and rivers and requested by the Water Quality Unit of ADEM's Water Division.

Monthly periphyton and intensive water quality samples have been collected at 48 stations. One-time periphyton sampling has been conducted during May and June at an additional 71 intensive water quality stations.

Point / Nonpoint Source Assessment Programs (PSAP / NPASP)

2005 Rivers and Streams Monitoring: In response to several EPA initiatives and monitoring requirements ADEM is currently revising its 1997 monitoring strategy. The revision is designed to meet emerging data needs and address weaknesses identified during the last 5-year monitoring cycle. In cooperation with the Water Quality Branch of the Water Division, staff developed new methods to assess overall water quality. These methods are being tested during a pilot study to be conducted in the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa (ACT) River basins during 2005. Monthly water quality and periphyton sampling continued April through June. Macroinvertebrate sampling and one-time periphyton sampling (diatoms, periphyton biomass as chlorophyll a, and a Rapid Periphyton Survey were completed at 116 stations, located primarily within the ACT River basin.

Reservoir Water Quality Monitoring (RWQM) Program

RWQM 2005: Monthly water quality sampling, April-June was conducted for the Surface Water Quality Screening Assessment of the reservoirs and tributary embayments of the ACT Basins . In addition to the 89 intensive survey stations, four ambient trends and two 303(d) stations are also sampled according to the RWQM protocol. Data compilation for these projects was initiated. Monthly sampling will be conducted through October.

Protocol development and sample scheduling for an additional 20 stations, has been completed for the critical period monitoring (August) of Smith, Bankhead, Tuscaloosa, Oliver, Holt, Warrior, and Big Creek reservoirs in accordance with the two-year monitoring rotation of all lakes in the state.

Reporting: Work on the draft report Tributary Embayment Water Quality Assessment of the Tennessee River Basin 2003 continued during the 3rd Quarter. Work has begun on the draft report of the Water Quality Assessment of the Southeast Rivers and Reservoirs 2004.

Data Requests: ADEM Water Division, ADEM Public Affairs, ADCNR, Auburn University, Alabama Power, University of Alabama, Georgia Dept. Of Natural Resources, Geological Survey of Alabama, USFWS, USGS, Middle Tallapoosa Clean Water Partnership, TVA, and private citizens.

Ambient Monitoring

Staff in Birmingham, Mobile and Montgomery conducted 155 sampling visits at Ambient Monitoring Stations during the 3rd Quarter of FY05. Water samples for both chemical analyses and field parameter measurements were collected. Received chemical analytical results and all field parameter data have been entered into the Montgomery Ambient Monitoring Database. QA/QC of data continues. Efforts continue to merge all Ambient Monitoring data into the Master database on the file server. The Ambient Monitoring Program station and parameter list was re-evaluated by the Water Quality Branch and updated to better reflect current ambient monitoring needs. The revised sampling effort began in March.

Alabama Monitoring and Assessment Program (ALAMAP)

ALAMAP was suspended indefinitely at the beginning of the 2005 season so that probabilistic approaches could be incorporated into basin screening assessments. All data for years before 2005 has been collected, entered, QA'd and is available on the server for use by Water Division and others. 2004 data is complete and QA'd, and has been merged with the Master database.

ADEM's Monitoring Strategy

In response to several EPA initiatives and monitoring requirements, ADEM is currently revising ASSESS, its monitoring strategy document drafted in 1997. The strategy has been revised to meet emerging data needs and address weaknesses identified during the last 5-year monitoring cycle. In cooperation with the Water Quality Branch of the Water Division, staff have been developing new methods to assess overall water quality. These methods will be evaluated during a pilot study to be conducted in the

Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa River basins during 2005. Intensive chemical and biological sampling will be conducted March through October 2005 to fully assess all sites in accordance with ADEM's 2005 Assessment and Listing Methodology, and to refine current assessment guidelines and criteria for both chemical (nutrients and sedimentation) and biological indicators (macroinvertebrates, fish, and periphyton) to determine watershed conditions.

QA/QC and Data Mgt

The ADEM Freshwater Macroinvertebrate Biological Assessment SOP is currently being updated. As part of this effort, ADEM's macroinvertebrate data, including quality control records, were analyzed to develop data quality requirements that will be used to assess and report data quality results for each member of the macroinvertebrate laboratory staff. Additionally, ecoregional reference reach data were analyzed to define bioregions, stream classes where the macroinvertebrate communities are relatively homogeneous. Bioregions were primarily defined by Level III ecoregion and stream size. Data from each bioregion was then used to develop assessment guidelines or criteria. A final draft of the SOP was completed during the 2nd quarter and is currently being reviewed by outside agencies, including USEPA Region IV.

The ADEM Periphyton database was completed.

The ADEM Human Disturbance Gradient for database for the Alabama, Coosa and Tallapoosa basin reconnaissance was created.

ACT reconnaissance sites were entered into the Global Location Database.

Toxicity Testing

The ADEM bioassay laboratory is preparing for FY06 testing to begin July 05. Testing for FY05 was completed in March and included several chronic definitive tests, which provided additional information to water quality engineers.

AGPT

In addition to the yearly reservoir samples collected in August, samples are being collected from Elk River three times this year for algal growth potential testing. All testing will be conducted sometime after August.

OTHER

We are excited to fill one of our vacancies at the end of July; Paula Brooks will be involved in toxicity testing, microbiology, AGPT, and will assist in field work for other programs.

News From Georgia

Well, things are anything but “business as usual” in Georgia’s program these days. With many senior management retiring from Georgia’s EPD, there are new faces in key management positions. We are pleased to announce that Linda MacGregor, P.E., has just been appointed as Chief of the Ga. EPD Watershed Protection Branch. Ms. MacGregor brings over 22 years of engineering and business experience in master planning, detailed engineering, project scheduling, and construction management with her to the helm of the Watershed Protection Branch. Also, and a little closer to home, Mork Winn, Manager of Georgia’s Watershed Planning and Monitoring Program for many years, has retired after 34 years of faithful service. Dr. Elizabeth Booth who has managed the TMDL Modeling and Development Unit has been named acting Manager of the Program.

For those of you that knew Shannon Winsness and Kristen Sanford of Georgia’s “Bug” team, both have moved on to pursue other careers within Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division. Kristen is pursuing her career interests as a geologist with the EPD’s Hazardous Waste Branch and Shannon is breathing fresher air in his new position in Cartersville at EPD’s Mountain District Office where he works in the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Unit. We wish both of them well in their new jobs. The good news in this (for those of us remaining) is that our hiring restrictions at EPD have eased and we will shortly be welcoming 3 new people into the Ambient Monitoring Unit (AMU). Michele Brassett and Cody Jones will be joining the AMU “Bug Team” on July 16, 2005. Susan Salter is transferring from EPD’s Permitting Compliance and Enforcement Program to join the AMU. Susan will become Georgia’s new 305(b)/303(d) “Expert” on August 01, 2005.

Other news related to Georgia’s Bug program is that Phase 3 of Georgia’s contract with Columbus State University to develop Macro-Invertebrate Criteria for the State has been completed and a draft final report submitted. Phase 3 of this work dealt with developing a numerical index on which to score streams in each of Georgia’s Ecoregions. Work continues on phases 4 and 5 of this project with completion anticipated by the end of this year. Many thanks to Dr. Jim Gore and his team for the hard work that continues to be put into this important project.

Georgia's stream monitoring this year is also a little out of the ordinary. In our normal River Basin Rotation Monitoring schedule, we would have been concentrating in the Chattahoochee / Flint Basins for 2005. Instead, most of our monitoring effort this year has gone into the Coosa River Basin as part of the Coosa River Modeling Project. This project is a multi agency collaboration to gather data on the Coosa, Etowah, Oostanaula, Conasauga, and Coosawattee Rivers and Lake Weiss. Collaborators include the Georgia EPD, Alabama DEM, and U.S. EPA. This is a three-year project involving 2 years of intensive data gathering followed by a year of advanced water quality modeling. Ultimately, this work will all go toward reassessing current TMDL's on the Coosa River and Lake Weiss and to lay the foundation for future regulatory decisions in this river basin.

Georgia lake monitoring for 2005 includes the 7-month Lake Standards Monitoring and Quarterly Basin Lake Monitoring. Lake Standards Monitoring is being conducted on Walter F. George, West Point, Lanier, Allatoona, Jackson and Carters, during the seven month growing season of April-October, as in past years. For the basin lakes, we have switched the Chattahoochee and Flint Basins reservoir group (7 lakes), with the Tennessee and are conducting quarterly monitoring of Lakes Blue Ridge, Nottely, and Chatuge, due to the resource commitment made on the Coosa River Modeling Project.

Fish tissue assessment project data for fiscal year (FY) 2004 were utilized for the GaDNR *2005 Update Guidelines for Eating Fish From Georgia Waters*, and included reassessed guidance for Lakes Harding (Bartlett's Ferry), Goat Rock and Oliver, located on the Georgia-Alabama Stateline. Body burdens of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in Lake Harding fish were found to have declined from those documented in the past, mirroring findings of the previous year from new collections in Lake West Point, located upstream. No apparent change in PCB levels in Goat Rock or Oliver Lake fish was evident. Fish tissue project collections for FY2005 included: 20 striped bass from the Coosa River system; sucker species from 6 tributaries to the Conasauga River to help pinpoint watershed inputs of PCBs; further collections in Albany, Georgia to locate sources of DDT contaminants found in a small urban lake; and assessment of contaminant loads in lower Savannah River striped bass. In 1988, the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) enacted a harvest moratorium on striped bass downstream of the Clarks Hill/Thurmond Reservoir dam, followed by a commensurate action by South Carolina in 1991. In support of a proposed a regulation change to open a limited harvest of striped bass in the lower Savannah, the GaDNR initiated collections of striped bass in the Spring 2004, for assessment of contaminants and potential consumption guidance. To date 45 striped bass have been collected and analyzed, from 12.6-39.3" in length. Mercury has been the single contaminant identified of concern. The FY06 Fish Tissue Projects Collection Plan is in process. For further information on the GaDNR fish tissue assessment program or issued consumption guidance, contact Linda Harn (404-675-1647 or Linda_harn@dnr.state.ga.us).

Georgia's Wildlife Division Fish Sampling Team is continuing their work this year in the Blue Ridge section of North Georgia. We were hoping to get some more information from them but they are in the field and incommunicado.

And lastly, Georgia is still waiting on final approval of its 2004 305(b)/303(d) integrated list. In the mean time, staff are gearing up for solicitation and assessment of data for the 2006 integrated list.