

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

2 Martin Luther King Jr., Dr., Suite 1152 East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Noel Holcomb, Commissioner  
Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., Director  
Environmental Protection Division  
(404) 656-4713

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 29, 2006**

### **Four Major Georgia Lakes Proposed To Be Added To State's Water Quality List**

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will propose adding three new major lakes and additional sections of a fourth major lake to Georgia's 305(b)/303(d) Integrated List of Waters. The List of Waters is a federally required list of water bodies within the state that do not meet water quality standards.

"The EPD decision to add lakes Lanier, Walter F. George, Carter's and additional sections of Allatoona to the draft 305(b)/303(d) list is the next step toward ensuring water quality in these important lakes," said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. "We already have many effective water quality measures in place, but this listing means Georgia must take even stronger actions to protect these vital resources."

The 305(b)/303(d) list of waters, which references sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act, includes waterways where water quality standards are not being met and/or monitoring data has indicated an impairment of water quality. Each of the lakes proposed to be listed have data indicating they have periodically exceeded the water quality standard for chlorophyll *a* over the previous five-year monitoring period.

All plants, including algae, contain chlorophyll. Algae are an important food source for aquatic life, but excessive phosphorus entering a lake can cause algae growth and lead to environmental problems such as fish kills, lowered water clarity and the potential for toxic algae blooms. Discharges from "point sources" of pollution such as wastewater treatment plants can contribute to the water quality problems, however "nonpoint source" pollution, including fertilizer runoff from lawns and farm fields and stormwater runoff from paved areas such as streets and parking lots, also are to blame.

"Additional restrictions on municipalities and industry may help, but the fact is, non-point sources of pollution cause 90 percent of the problem," said EPD Watershed Protection Branch Chief Linda MacGregor.

Data collected from monitoring stations at Carter's Lake in northwest Georgia, portions of lakes Allatoona and Lanier located northwest and northeast of metropolitan Atlanta respectively, as well as Lake Walter F. George south of Columbus, indicated the chlorophyll *a* standards adopted for each specific lake location were periodically exceeded.

(more)

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

2 Martin Luther King Jr., Dr., Suite 1152 East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Noel Holcomb, Commissioner

Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., Director

Environmental Protection Division

(404) 656-4713

Page Two

Locations of monitoring stations where water quality standards for chlorophyll *a* were periodically exceeded include:

- **Lake Allatoona**-Etowah River, Little River, Midlake and Allatoona Creek
- **Carter's Lake**-Upstream Woodring Branch and Coosawattee River
- **Lake Lanier**-Brown's Bridge, Lanier Bridge and Flowery Branch
- **Lake Walter F. George**-Midlake (Highway 82)

Currently, the water quality problems in the four lakes do not pose a threat to human health or safety, but fishing, recreation and drinking water supplies could eventually be affected if the chlorophyll *a* problem is left unchecked.

The draft 305(b)/303(d) list is available for review at <http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/305b.html> or at the EPD Watershed Protection Branch office at 4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354. Public comments may be mailed to the EPD Watershed Protection Branch Chief at 4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354 or faxed to the attention of Linda MacGregor at 404/675-6244. Comments will be accepted through 4:30 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2006.

The next steps in addressing the lake water issues will include water quality monitoring and analysis, and eventually the development of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) calculations. A TMDL is an important tool, which in simplest terms, tells you how much of a pollutant can go into a body of water before the quality of the water violates standards. Once TMDLs are established for each lake, EPD will identify and implement actions to reduce phosphorus loading to lakes necessary to achieve chlorophyll *a* standards.

Contact: Kevin Chambers  
(404) 651-7970