



## Waters of the Oconee River Basin: What's Important to You?

### Participant Instructions

June 2, 2021

#### Introduction

Thank you for your interest in our project on the various uses of waters in the Oconee River basin. We'd like your input on the uses and benefits from the basin's rivers, lakes, and streams that you find most valuable.

Why are we doing this project? Much of the Oconee River Basin lies in the Upper Oconee Water Planning Region and the water plan for that region recognizes many benefits provided by the basin's water resources. However, basin-specific information on some of those uses and benefits is lacking and that's the data gap we're working to fill. The project is funded by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division through a Regional Water Plan Implementation Seed Grant.

Results will be provided to the Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council for their use in updating management practices in the regional water plan. Results will also be provided to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for their use in water planning and management. The information you provide, based on your knowledge and experience, will improve our results and help improve water planning for the region.

We're asking you to think about the most important ways that you use and benefit from the Oconee River basin's water resources in your work or personal life. Then, answer these questions:

- What locations on rivers, lakes, or streams in the basin are important to the water uses and benefits that you value?
- Why are these locations important to you? What use or benefit relates to each location?
- Have your experiences at those locations varied with the amount of water in the river, stream, or lake? If so, how? You may know times of year or specific dates that are better or worse for the uses important to you. You may know river flows or lake levels that you prefer or avoid. That's the type of input we want, if you have it.

## How to provide input

Three virtual meetings are scheduled to introduce the project and start getting input:

- June 8 at 1:00 PM
- June 10 at 10:00 AM
- June 16 at 4:30 PM

We hope that you attend **just one** of these online meetings. If you have not already done so, you can register [at this link](#).

You can use an interactive map to submit information. Or, you can submit information by email or US mail or in a phone interview. We're excited about the interactive map because it shows a range of uses we've already documented. More importantly, you can add as many locations as you want anywhere in the basin and add information about each location. We think the map is interesting and informative to use, so you may want to at least check it out. But, we know the interactive map will not work for everyone and we also welcome your input by email, US mail, or phone. If you know you do not want to use the interactive map, you can skip to the section titled [Submit information by phone, email, or US email](#).

## How to use the interactive map

You'll receive a unique link to a map that will allow you to add your own information. We used Google maps to build the initial map and have included some locations where different uses have already been documented. These entries are just examples of the kinds of information we're seeking, and the map is far from complete. **Information from you is essential to building a fuller picture. Your input will be most helpful if received by July 15, 2021.**

There are three basic steps in using the map to provide input:

- Look at the existing information on the map to get an idea of the kinds of information we're seeking and to prompt your thoughts.
- Add markers at the locations important to the water uses and benefits that you value.
- Add details that explain your uses and experiences at the locations you've added.

Here are details on how to do each of these steps. [Click here](#) for a video demonstration of the following steps:

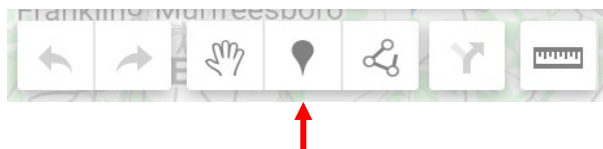
### Look at existing information on the map

1. To start using the map, click on the link you received by email. If the map does not open in edit mode, be sure you are logged into a google account (if you told us that you don't have a google account, we sent you log-in information in the same email with the map link).

2. The initial map has 10 layers shown in the legend window on the left side of the map. The first layer is specifically for the information you want to contribute. Each of the remaining layers includes locations with similar water uses or benefits, as described by the name of the layer.
3. You will need to scroll down in the legend window to see all the layers. You can see a short description of each layer is included in a document on [the project webpage](#).
4. Each layer can be turned on or off by checking or unchecking the box next to it. To start, you may want to only turn on the layers representing the water uses or benefits most important to you.
5. Each layer has some points that give examples of the kinds of information that's of interest in this project. To look at some examples, click on an entry of interest in the list that opens under a layer name when your check it. Or, zoom in to a location of interest to you and click on one of the existing locations.
6. You can zoom in and out by using the +/- buttons on the lower right-hand side of the screen. You can also use your trackpad or mouse to zoom in and out.
7. When you click on an existing location, a window will open with the location name and details describing it (if the window is hidden by something else on the screen, just move the map enough to see it). Some of the existing locations highlight specific features like parks. Others highlight a category of use, like municipal water withdrawal, or a feature found in many locations throughout the basin, like oxbow lakes. The locations and the details are included to demonstrate the types of information we want and to prompt your thinking. The sources we used to create the initial map are listed in the References document on [the project webpage](#).
8. If you want to change any of the details on the initial map, please [create a new point](#) in that location with the information you want shown (see the next step for how to do this). Do not edit the existing details, because there is a chance that we will not pick those changes up.

#### Add markers at the locations important to you

1. Start by creating your own points. Think about the most important ways that you benefit from water resources in the Oconee basin in your work or personal life. What locations on rivers, lakes or streams in the basin are important to what you use and value about the Oconee basin's water resources? Create points at those locations.
2. There are two ways to create your own points. The first way is to use the "add marker" tool. in the tool bar below the search field at the top of the page, there is a push pin icon:



Simply click the "add marker" tool, then use your cursor to click on a location on the map (zoom in or out to find the right spot). Then, click the save button.

3. The second way to create a point is by using the search bar. You can type in the name or address of a location, chose that location from the search results, and then click "add to map."

4. Before you add a point with the “add marker” tool or by using the search bar, be sure to click on the “Your Contribution” layer. It will then be the active layer, as shown by the blue line left of the layer name, and the points you add will go into the layer created specifically for your additions.
5. If you are feeling extra creative, you can contribute lines or polygons to the map, by using the “draw a line” tool that is next to the “add marker” tool. Select the tool and chose a location on the map to begin. You can draw a line with this tool or go further to connect the beginning of your line to the end of your line to create a polygon. Lines and polygons can be helpful to communicate information that is different from regular points. For example, you might like to draw a line to show a favorite walking or biking trail. You might want to create a polygon to outline an area of land or water which is important to you. There are also examples of these shapes on the initial map for you to see.
6. Before drawing a line or a polygon, be sure to click on the “Your Contribution” layer. It will then be the active layer, as shown by the blue line left of the layer name, and the line or polygon you add will go into the layer created specifically for your information.
7. Click the save button to save your new line or polygon. When you are done drawing lines and polygons, select the hand icon on the tool bar to leave drawing mode.
8. You may want to delete a point, line or polygon that you added to the map – no problem! You can do this by clicking on what you want to delete and then using the trash can icon on the bottom right-hand corner of the information window that opens. You can also use the “undo” button [back arrow] and “redo” button [forward arrow] on the tool bar.

#### Add details that explain your uses and experiences at the locations you’ve added

1. After you add a point, line or polygon to the map, click on it. A window will open with boxes where you can enter the location name and details about that location. If the boxes to enter information are not showing, click the pencil icon in the bottom right corner of the window.
2. In the details box, please answer a few questions: Why the location is important to you – what use or value relates to that location? How has your experiences at the location varied with the amount of water in the river, stream, or lake? Has it varied with time of year or when water levels are high or low? You may know specific dates that have been better or worse for the uses important to you. Or, you may know river flows or lake water levels that you prefer or want to avoid. Information like that is particularly helpful for this project. Add whatever you want to tell us about the location.
3. Once you type in the location name and the details you want to share, press the save button. Please leave the icon as the default push pin so we can find your entries later!
4. You may want to submit pictures or documents to illustrate or expand the information you’ve provided. Pictures can be uploaded by clicking on a point and then selecting the “camera” tool in the lower right portion of the window that opens. If you want to submit documents, see the email and US mail information in the next section. Geographic data in KML files or shapefiles are also welcome if you want to share them.

It will be most helpful if you complete your entries on the map and submit any supporting information by July 15, 2021. We'll be checking in with people we've not heard from between now and then.

### Submit information by phone, email, or US email

If you want to schedule a phone interview, contact Regina at [rnasrallah@h2opolicycenter.org](mailto:rnasrallah@h2opolicycenter.org) or (864) 897-9689. Please contact us by June 15, 2021 to schedule your phone interview.

If you want to send input by email, send to Regina at [rnasrallah@h2opolicycenter.org](mailto:rnasrallah@h2opolicycenter.org). If you prefer US mail, send your comments and any supporting documents to this address:

Gail Cowie  
Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center  
125 Pine Avenue  
Albany, GA 31702

Again, we are asking you to think about the most important ways that you benefit from water resources in the Oconee basin in your work or personal life and respond to the questions in the bullets on page 1 of this document. Any information you provide in response to these questions will be useful.

**It will be most helpful to receive information from you by July 15, 2021.** We'll be checking in with people we've not heard from between now and then.

### What happens after we get input?

After we receive and compile the submitted information, we'll hold additional meetings later in the year to share the results with you and other contributors. At that time, you'll have an opportunity to review and provide additional feedback to help refine the results.

We are also summarizing scientific and technical studies on Oconee River basin water resources. That information will be combined with the input from water users in our final report to the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council and Georgia Environmental Protection Division, which will be available to anyone who is interested.