

Ochlockonee River Basin

Old Spanish documents refer to this river sometimes as the Rio Agna and other times as the Rio de Lagna. On a map dated 1683, it is referred to as the Rio Lana. English maps of the eighteenth century show the name as Ogeelaganu and Ochloconee. With this name, the river probably retains the flavor of the Hitchiti language. Variations of this continued into the 1800's with names like Ockatockany (1855) and O-clock-ney (1822). Both the names Lagna and Lana may be Spanish renditions of the Muskogean word LAH'nee for yellow. In those days Georgia clay would have made the entire river as yellow as the river above the 60 year old Lake Talquin dam is today.

Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs) of the Ochlockonee River Basin

03120002	Upper Ochlockonee River
03120003	Lower Ochlockonee River
03120001	Wards Creek
03110103	Aucilla River

Quick Facts



The Ochlockonee River basin is located in Georgia and Florida and drains approximately 6,330 square miles. Approximately 1,460 square miles of the basin are in Georgia. The basin lies within the Coastal Plain physiographic province, which extends throughout the southeastern United States.

The headwaters are located in Worth County and the river flows in a southwesterly direction into Florida and eventually empties into the Gulf of Mexico. One of the unique features of the Ochlockonee River is the presence of two smaller watersheds, the Aucilla River and Wards Creek watersheds, each of which discharge their waters separately into the Gulf of Mexico without ever merging with the waters of the Ochlockonee River.

The 1988-90 land cover interpretation showed 41 percent of the basin in forest cover, 8 percent in wetlands, 2 percent in urban land cover, and 44 percent in agriculture. In 1997, there were some 384,436 acres devoted to agricultural production. All major commodities that are grown in Georgia (peanuts, corn, cotton, oats, rye, sorghum, soybeans, and tobacco) are produced in the Basin.

Biological Resources

The fish fauna existent in the Ochlockonee River is similar to other unregulated coastal plain streams in that it possesses a high percentage of game fish species. Redbreast sunfish, largemouth bass, and channel catfish contribute most to the game fish population by weight. Although not a game fish, spotted suckers are prevalent. Grayfin redhorses are also present, but not as numerous as

spotted suckers. Several species, including the Suwannee bass, Bannerfin shiner, and Spotted bullhead that occur in the Ochlockonee Basin are listed as rare in Georgia.

Environmental Concerns

Identified Issues

In many parts of the Ochlockonee basin, support for native aquatic life is potentially threatened by degradation of aquatic habitat. Habitat degradation is closely tied to sediment loading which can choke and alter stream bottom substrates. A second important type of habitat degradation in the Ochlockonee basin is loss of riparian tree cover, which can lead to increased water temperatures.

305b/303d

In the Ochlockonee River Basin, there are approximately 18 rivers and streams listed on the 2002 303(d) list as waters not meeting their designated use of fishing. These impaired waters include roughly 150 miles of rivers and streams in the Ochlockonee River Basin.

Fishing Advisories

Fish consumption advisories are issued by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for the Oconee River. Current advisories can be found on the web at <http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us>. Advisories are issued for Largemouth Bass, White Catfish, and Spotted Sucker.

NPDES Discharges

The Clean Water Act (CWA), the basic federal law designed to control water pollution in the United States, prohibits the discharge of any pollutant into waters of the United States except in compliance with a National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued pursuant to the Act. Currently, there are approximately 13 facilities, including industries and municipalities, authorized to discharge wastewater into the Ochlockonee River Basin pursuant to NPDES Permits.

How to Get Involved

Watershed Groups in the Basin

Friends of the Ochlockonee

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