Where’s My Creek?
~ Using Upper Oconee Watershed Network (UOWN) water quality data and Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Stormwater Management Program Watershed Management Plan (WMP) documents to foster environmental responsibility for watershed conservation in Athens, Georgia~

Athens has a water quality problem. Fourteen of the 17 watersheds in the county are legally classified as impaired (GAEPD, 2016). Local watershed groups have noted that many residents are unable to name the watershed they live within or identify local watershed issues.

Decades of research shows environmental responsibility and involvement increases with citizen awareness of ecological problems with potential for personal impacts. Involvement is further increased when the problem is perceived as realistic and not overblown or so severe as to illicit a feeling of helplessness (Story & Forsyth, 2008).

Where’s My Creek? (WMC) was developed to educate citizens on issues within their home watershed. After participants identify their watershed on a large map, they are given a “watershed snapshot” with UOWN water quality data and ACC WMP information. These documents are easily understood by all audiences while including actual data to show the true extent of water quality degradation. The documents include a watershed map, waterway picture and suggestions on improving watershed interactions at the parcel level. Lastly, watershed specific magnets are given out as a reminder to citizens of where they live.

Future work on WMC will consist of digitizing the initiative for web-based interactions. If selected, a limited run of T-shirts for the HUC10 watersheds will be printed in 2019.