

# Visual Stream Monitoring: Exploring Georgia's Visual Monitoring Methods

Seirisse J. Baker

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**Affiliation:** State Coordinator, Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch, 2 MLK, Jr., Dr. NW, Atlanta, GA 30334

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**Abstract.** Visual stream monitoring is one of the easiest and most important ways for citizens to assess stream health, and it is often the most overlooked. Recently, Georgia Adopt-A-Stream produced an updated version of their visual stream monitoring program including a revised manual, forms and procedures. The highlight of the procedures is a newly developed rapid habitat assessment of instream conditions. This assessment is Georgia specific and includes an evaluation of 10 parameters for both rocky and muddy bottom streams. Created for volunteers, the visual assessment includes drawings of stream conditions, in-depth directions and a poster guide with descriptions and photographs. Additionally, the visual monitoring procedures encourage taking photo points, cross-section measurements and pebble counts. All data can be entered and viewed by the public through our online database. The website displays data in matrixes and graphs, producing time-lapse reproductions of the cross-section measurements. The visual assessment compliments other monitoring activity, indicating the chemical and biological health of a stream. This presentation will describe the process Georgia Adopt-A-Stream went through to update the visual monitoring program, sharing lessons learned while demonstrating the value of these surveys in assessing stream health with our volunteers and partners across the State.