# SURVEY FOR ENDANGERED MUSSELS IN LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER AND BIG INDIAN CREEK AT PROPOSED WATER INTAKES, CARROLL COUNTY, GEORGIA

### Prepared for:

Law Offices of Tommy Craig Post Office Box 1587 1144 College Avenue Covington, GA 30015

Prepared by:

Gerald R. Dinkins
Dinkins Biological Consulting, LLC
3716 West Beaver Creek Drive
Powell, TN 37849

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**DBC Project 1156** 

#### INTRODUCTION

For this contract, Dinkins Biological Consulting (DBC) conducted a survey for endangered freshwater mussels in two reaches of the Little Tallapoosa River and one reach of Big Indian Creek in Carroll County, Georgia. The three study reaches are being considered by Carroll County as potential sites for a water supply intake.

Proposed intake locations on the Little Tallapoosa River are located a few hundred feet upstream of the County Road (CR) 821 bridge at the mouth of Garrett Creek (upper location), and immediately downstream of the State Route (SR) 100 bridge (lower location). The proposed intake on Big Indian Creek is located at the confluence with Indian Branch. The upper location on the Little Tallapoosa River occurs on the southwest quadrant of the Bowdon East, Georgia quadrangle map (quad). The lower location on the Little Tallapoosa River occurs on the northeast quadrant of the Graham, Georgia quad. The intake location on Big Indian Creek occurs on the northeast quadrant of the Bowdon West, Georgia quad. Based on information provided by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) – Natural Heritage Program, there are no historical records of federally protected mussel species in Carroll County or in any of these three map quadrants (Tables 1-1 and 1-2). However, there are numerous historical and recent records of the federally threatened Finelined pocketbook (*Hamiota altilis*) just to the north in the Tallapoosa River and in several small tributaries in Haralson County (Williams et al., 2008).

Big Indian Creek arises from numerous headwater streams originating near the Haralson/Carroll County divide. Flowing generally in a southern direction, it joins with the Little Tallapoosa River at the point where the river leaves Georgia and flows westward into Alabama. The Little Tallapoosa River originates in northeast Carroll County, and flows generally southwestern to its confluence with the Tallapoosa River in Randolph County, Alabama. Big Indian Creek and the Little Tallapoosa River are situated in the southwestern portion of the Central Uplands District of the Piedmont physiographic province. Stream valleys in this portion of the district are not as open as those to the northeast. They exhibit a rectangular drainage pattern and are only 100-150 feet below the surrounding area (Clark and Zisa, 1976).

Table 1-1
Protected Mussel Species Historically Occurring in Carroll County

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status
	None		

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources Website, searched September 2008.

Table 1-2
Protected Aquatic Species Reported in Quarter Quadrangles of the Three Survey Reaches in Carroll County, Georgia

Study Reach	Quadrangle	Quadrant	Protected Aquatic Species
Little Tallapoosa River (upper)	Bowdon East	Southwest	None
Little Tallapoosa River (lower)	Graham	Northeast	None
Big Indian Creek	Bowdon West	Northeast/ Southeast	None

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources Website for protected species by USGS quadrangle map, searched September 2008.

#### **METHODS**

Fieldwork for this project was conducted on 22 and 23 July 2008. Prior to the field effort, recent precipitation, streamflow and gage height data were examined using the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) network of monitoring gages via the Internet to ensure conditions were appropriate for surveying. Based on information from the USGS gage on the Little Tallapoosa River near Newell, Alabama, the river ranged from 27 – 41 cubic feet/second during the sampling effort, well below the median daily flow for the time period. Weather during the survey was clear and the daytime air temperature reached approximately 29° Centigrade (85° Fahrenheit). Both streams were moderately turbid and at low level. Physical characteristics and general habitat data for both streams are provided in Tables 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3, respectively.

The mussel survey was conducted by grubbing the bottom in search of live and dead shells. Four experienced mussel surveyors searched all available habitats in each reach from bank to bank until it was felt all habitats had been sufficiently examined. In addition, both stream banks and all exposed substrate (gravel/sand bars) were examined for shell remains. Principal habitat characteristics (e.g., substrate composition, channel width, depths) were recorded on a field sheet. Upstream and downstream search boundaries and the proposed intake location were recorded using a hand-held Global Positioning System unit (Garmin E-Trex Legend). Live mussels were kept in a submerged mesh bag until the search was completed, and then identified to species, counted, and returned to the collection site. All fresh dead valves were retained and deposited in the DBC mollusk collection.

A summary of the upstream and downstream coordinates and length of each stream reach is provided in Table 2-1. Exact survey length was measured using a Fieldranger Distance Measurer. Water temperature and flow were estimated at the time of the survey. Survey location maps are provided in Appendix A, and color photographs of the three survey reaches are presented in Appendix B. A copy of the field team's data sheets is provided in Appendix C. Streamflow characteristics of the Little Tallapoosa River during the study period as reported by the U.S. Geological Survey flow gauges near Newell, Alabama and Carrollton, Georgia are provided in Appendix D.

Table 2-1 Stream Reaches Surveyed for Carroll County Water Intake

Stream	GPS Coordinates	Upstream GPS	Downstream GPS	Upstream Survey	Downstream Survey
	at Intake	Coordinates	Coordinates	(ft)	Reach (ft)
Title Tollonoog Dirigina	N33.49391°	N33.51181°	N33.51355°		
Little Tallapoosa Mvel-uppel	W85.27988°	W85.23037°	W85.23392°	CIC	086
Title Tollonoon Diring	N33.49358°	N33.49173°	N33.49261°	0.00	000
Little Tallapoosa MVel-10Wel	W85.27998°	W85.27954°	W85.28371°	240	1380
Big Indian Crook	N33.55697°	N33.55618°	N33.55544°		0001
Dig muan Cicen	W85.28337°	W85.28246°	W85.28515°	070	1000

Physical Characteristics of Study Reaches Examined for Carroll County Water Intake Table 2-2

	Up	Upstream of Intake	Хе	Dow	Downstream of Intake	ake	Estimated	Estimated
Stream	Min/max/avg water depth (ft)	Min/max/avgMin/max/avgMin/max/avgMin/max/avgMin/max/avgMin/max/avgwater depthchannelwetted widthwater depthchannelwetted width(ft)width (ft)(ft)(ft)(ft)	Min/max/avg wetted width (ft)	Min/max/avg water depth (ft)	Min/max/avg channel width (ft)	Min/max/avg wetted width (ft)	Temp (F°)	Flow (ft³/sec)
Little Tallapoosa River- upper	0.5/3/1.5	09/0L/05	35/50/40	0.5/3/1.5	09/02/05	35/50/40	80	25
Little Tallapoosa Riverlower	0.5/3/1.5	09/08/09	40/50/45	0.5/8/1.5	09/09/09	40/50/45	80	30
Big Indian Creek	0.5/4/1	25/40/30	10/20/15	0.5/3/1	30/50/40	15/30/20	80	8

Table 2-3 General habitat data for Little Tallapoosa River and Big Indian Creek

		Little Tallapoosa River-upper	Little Tallapoosa River-lower	Big Indian Creek
	Riffle	X	X	X
	Run	X	X	X
Habitats	Pool	X	X	X
	Margin	X	X	X
	Slackwater			
	Flow Conditions	Low	Low	Low
	Current Velocity	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Channel Morphology	Natural	Natural	Natural
	Bank Erosion	Moderate	Moderate	Severe
Physical	Riffle Development	Fair	Fair	Poor
Characteristics	Riffle Quality	Poor	Poor	Poor
	Embedded	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Clarity	Fair	Fair	Fair
	Color	Brown	Brown	Brown
	Canopy	Fringing	Fringing	Closed
	Building/roads		X	
	Maintained lawn		X	
	Wetland		X	X
Don do minoret	Forest	X	X	
Predominant	Shrub			X
Land Use	Row Crop			
	Open Pasture	X	X	X
	Active construction			
	Residential/Park		X	
	Large Trees	X	X	X
Riparian	Small Trees		22	
Vegetation	Shrubs	X	X	X
9	Grass/Weeds		X	X
	Undercut Banks			
	Grass			
	Shallows	X	X	X
	Rip/Rap			
	Root Mats	X	X	X
Margin Habitats	Water Willow			
	Clay/Hardpan			
	Rock Ledge		X	
	Woody Debris Pile	X	X	X
	Concrete	4.4		Λ
	Margin Quality	Fair	Fair	Poor

2-3

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mussel sampling in two reaches of the Little Tallapoosa River revealed a total of three live and four dead mussels representing one species (Table 3-1). This species, the Southern rainbow (*Villosa vibex*) is not listed as a state or federally protected species. The American Fisheries Society considers the Southern rainbow to be **Currently Stable** across its range (Williams, et al.; 1993). The Southern rainbow is found in small creeks to large rivers throughout the Mobile Basin usually in slight to moderate current. It typically occurs in substrates of various combinations of sand, clay, and gravel. *Villosa vibex* appears to have some tolerance of silty conditions but is typically not found in pure mud substrates (Williams, et al., 2008). No live mussels or dead shells were found in Big Indian Creek.

One species of native aquatic snail, the Rippled elimia (*Elimia caelatura*), was infrequently encountered in both reaches of the Little Tallapoosa River. The Rippled elimia is a common and widespread species complex, with subspecies occurring in many streams in the Coosa and Alabama River basins of Georgia and Alabama (Burch, 1982). No aquatic snails were found in Big Indian Creek.

The target species for this survey, the federally threatened Finelined pocketbook (*Hamiota altilis*) was not found. Like the Southern rainbow, it occurs in small creeks to large rivers, and is typically found in areas with at least some current, though usually not in swift current. Substrates in which the Finelined pocketbook usually occurs include sand and mixtures of sand and gravel without heavy silt accumulations (Williams, et al., 2008). Direct observations of the habitat at each of the three proposed intake locations revealed all are impacted by excessive sedimentation attributable to local land uses, particularly Big Indian Creek. The Finelined pocketbook, like most, if not all rare native mussels, is particularly sensitive to excessive sedimentation. Thus, it is unlikely this species occurs within the study area but was overlooked by the survey team.

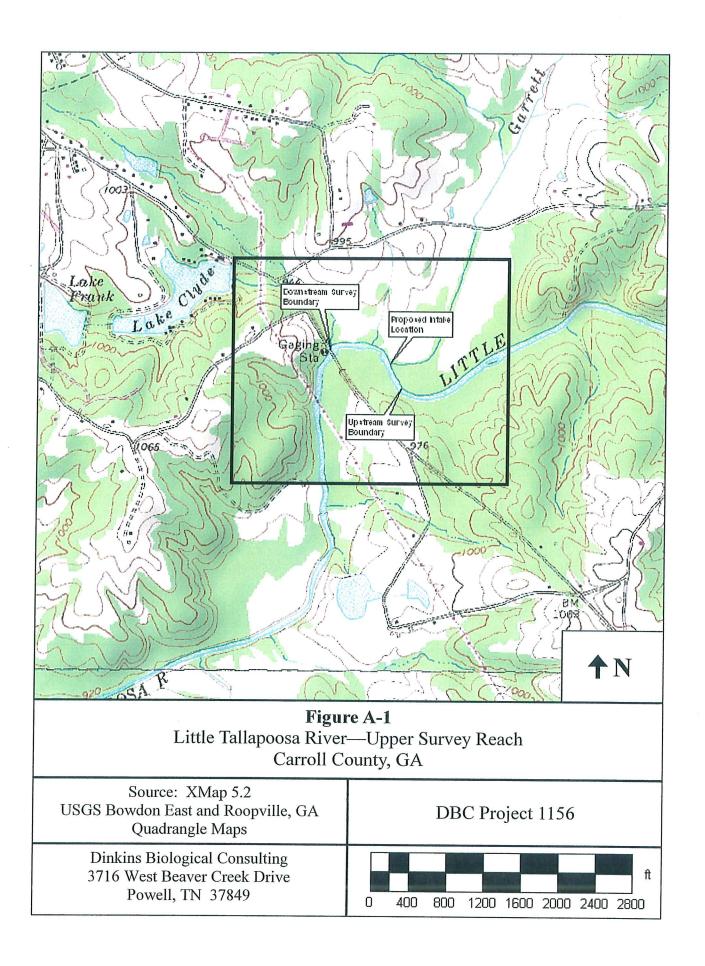
Table 3-1 Mussels Collected in Little Tallapoosa River and Big Indian Creek Carroll County, Georgia (22, 23 July 2008)

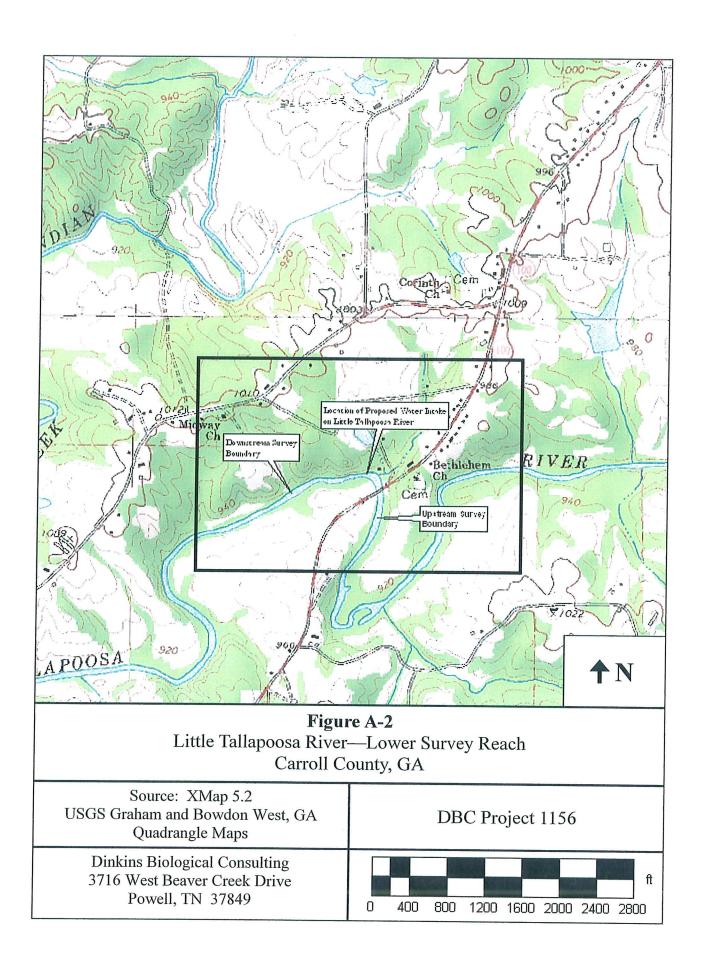
Scientific Name	Common Name	Talla	ttle poosa ·upper	Talla	ttle poosa -lower		ndian eek
		Live	Dead	Live	Dead	Live	Dead
Villosa vibex	Southern rainbow	0	1	3	3	0	0
Т	otal:	]	l		6	(	)

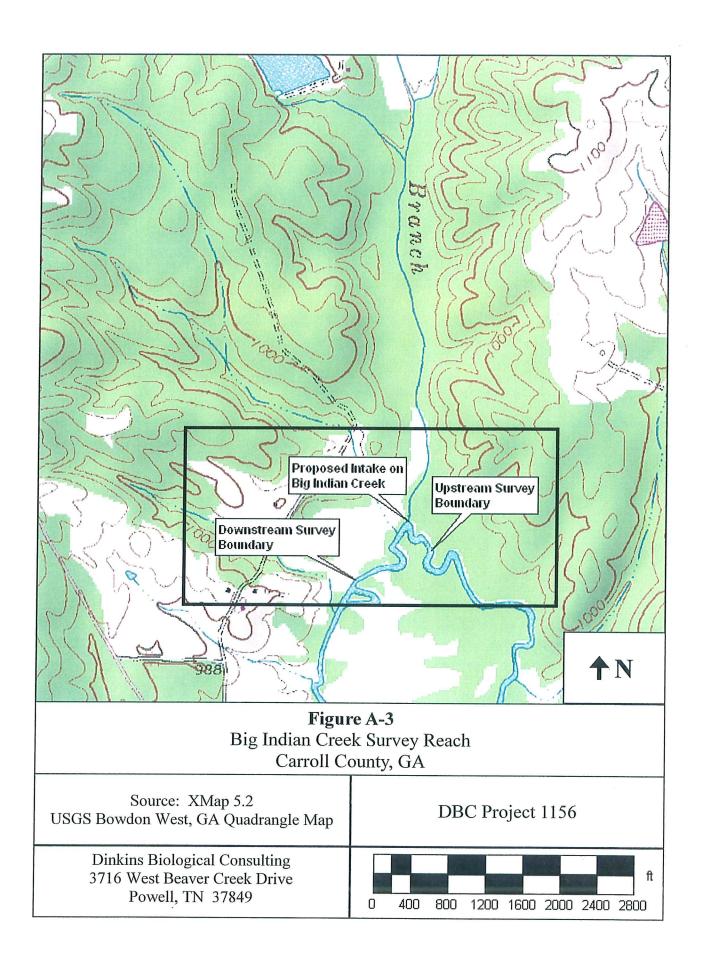
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# APPENDIX A SURVEY LOCATION MAPS







# APPENDIX B PHOTOGRAPHS OF SURVEY REACHES



Picture B-5: Big Indian Creek, approximately 1,000 ft downstream of proposed intake, Carroll County, Georgia. View looking upstream from center of channel. 23 July 2008.



Picture B-6: Big Indian Creek, approximately 1,000 ft downstream of proposed intake, Carroll County, Georgia. View looking downstream from center of channel. 23 July 2008.



Picture B-3: Little Tallapoosa River at site of proposed intake (lower study reach), Carroll County, Georgia. View looking upstream from center of channel. 22 July 2008.



Picture B-4: Little Tallapoosa River at site of proposed intake (lower study reach), Carroll County, Georgia. View looking downstream from center of channel. 22 July 2008.



Picture B-1: Little Tallapoosa River at site of proposed intake (upper study reach), Carroll County, Georgia. View looking upstream from center of channel. 22 July 2008.



Picture B-2: Little Tallapoosa River at site of proposed intake (upper study reach), Carroll County, Georgia. View looking downstream from center of channel. 22 July 2008

# APPENDIX C FIELD DATA SHEETS

# Stream Survey Field Form

Task Order	P.I. Number:	Location: Mouth	of Gor	rett Co	cok		
Upper Lat:	Long:		Lower Lat:		Lon	g:	
Stream Name and C	rossing Number: Little Tall of	DOSA RIVER -	Upper		County:	Canoll	
Date: 07-22-0	River Basin a	nd HUC Code: C	205a				-
	D. EWG, TCD, ZCD						
The Real Property lies and the Park of the	ine □6X10'seine □Dipnet	□BP shocker □	□Boat shoc	ker 🖾	Mussels ♥Gr	ubbing Diving	□Snail
	☐ storm heavy ☐ mostly cloud					n rain in the past 7	
Weather Conditions	☐ rain (steady) ☐ partly cloudy					0,2 M	
Containons	rain (intermittent) clear			-	Approx. amou	nt= 0,2,701	
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Characterization	☐ Intermittent	☐ High		aigtened			
	☐ Ephemeral	☐ Flooding	LI De	epened			
	☐ Tidal  Predominant Surrounding Landsca	Low	Adaminant		~		B
	Forest Commercial Agricultu		st dominant)			Flow Calculations	
Watershed		esidential			Length	Depths	Times
Features	Other (explain)						
	,,				Width:		
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Riparian	Buffer Type RDB -Up LDB -	UP RDB-Down LD	B-Down	U	PPER	LO	NER
Vegetation	Trees/shrubs 🏳 🖂	(Z	/	B Buffer wi	idth=	RDB Buffer wid	ith≕
(Observe 18m from	Grasses 🗆 🗆			B buffer wid	dth	LDB Buffer wid	#h
Streambank)	Other Herbaceous			D Duner wic			ur
		ER				LOWER	
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		Unstable, eroding			rately sloping	☐ Unstable, e	
		Moderately stable			ly sloping	Moderately	
Canopy Cover	Upper □ Open □ Partly Open		sed	Lower	r □ Open □ Pa	rtly Open 🖾 Fring	ing Closed
Instream Features	Min/Max/Avg DepthsO,S	1 3 1	15'	Min/Ma	ax/Avg Depths	0,5'1 3'	11.5
Taken at centerline	Min./Max/Avg channel width	35 1 50 1	60	Min./Max	Avg channel wid	tth <u>50 / 70</u> ax/avg) <u>35 / 50</u>	160
	Wetted widths (min/max/av Estimated discharge 2.5 cfs			A SECURITY OF THE PARTY OF THE	Air Ten	CONTRACTOR OF THE PROPERTY OF	
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and 1000 ft downstream	• Consideration day			,			
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Samples Kept:	□Fish □Live Mussel	s Ø Relic Muss	sels 🖾 Sr	nails 🗆	Crayfish □I	Vone	
Habitat/Substrate Ch	aracterization in Reach - Describe	the streambank habi	tat and stream	substrate.	Include descrip	tions of woody debris	s, leaf packs,
algae, undercut banks	, embeddedness, etc. in addition to	describing the substra	ite types.	1 2		/	
Subst	nte coorse sank, for	re sand, q	pravel. 1	Noody	do bris or	casional, S	> trrang
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# Stream Survey Field Form

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	EWG, TCD, ZCD						
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	Predominant Surrounding Landson		ost dominant)			Flow Calculations	
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(Observe 18m from Streambank)	Grasses □ □ □	, /	RD RD	B buffer wid	dth 5 m	LDB Buffer wid	th 0-5
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Dank Description		Stable		☐ Genth	v slonina	□ Stable	L
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Instream Features Taken at centerline	Min./Max/Avg channel width_		60			ith 60160	
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as 450 ft upstream		variability (fow)high)	No?			No? □	
and 1000 ft downstream	,	3.,		/			
Fauna Presen	t: □Fish ጆMussels	⊠Snails ⊠C	orbicula C	Crayfish	□None	rana fina kanangari kataba di Samuriya nganada di adalawas ursadi	AND THE PARTY OF T
Samples Kept:	: □Fish ឯLive Musse	els PRelic Mus	-	nails 🗆		Vone	
	naracterization in Reach - Describ		/			tions of woody debri	s, leaf packs.
algae, undercut banks	s, embeddedness, etc. in addition to	describing the substra	ate types.				
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Watershed	Field/Pastures Industrial	Residential			Length	Depths Tim
Features	Other (explain)			_	- IAP III	
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large	es-bstrate, Ba	ints frod	lingin	SOV	ne reac	hes, Downs
wood	ly de bis com n	non, but s	tream	·Ve	ry work	able.

Date:_	7-23-08	Describe water	quality (turbidity	Tridian Branch  ) and note obvious point/non-point of	discharges; Describe Type and Road  Water Quality
crossing (	bridge, culvert etc.). Des	cribe any past alterations of	stream reach.	N VIS N 1,5 Ft.	Water quality
	WATER MOS	ood. Ven 1	H'le au	ituro pogenie d	e bris prosent.
	Good b	offer zone	, but s	tream still in	ractal by upshr
	cources.				
Map of Cr	rossing: Draw Reach and	label centerline, direction of	f flow, and	DC	OWN
orth		UP			
				0/2018	1. Branch
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## APPENDIX D

# STREAMFLOW CHARACTERISTICS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR NOONDAY CREEK AND ETOWAH RIVER



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National Water Information System: Web Interface

Data Category: USGS Water Resources

Real-time

Geographic Area:

**United States** 

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News: Recent changes

# USGS 02413000 LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER (US 27) AT CARROLLTON, GA. PROVISIONAL DATA SUBJECT TO REVISION

Available data for this site

Time-series: Real-time data

GO

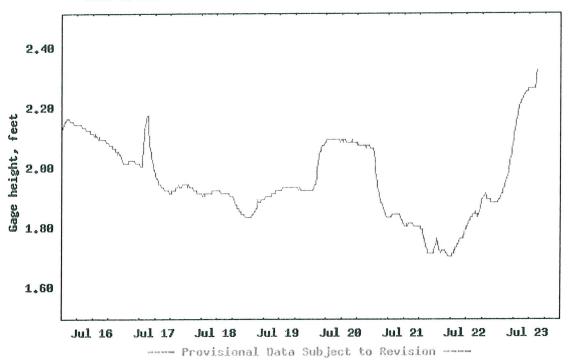
Available Parameters	Output format	Days	
All 2 Available Parameters for this site	Graph	7	
✓ 00065 Gage height	Graph w/ stats	(1-60)	GO
✓ 00045 Precipitation	Graph w/o stats		
00045 Trecipitation	Table		
	Tab-separated		

Summary of all available data for this site

## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 2.32 07-23-2008 15:00





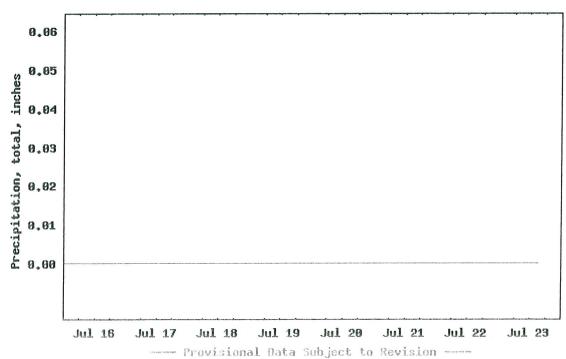
Create presentation-quality graph

Parameter 00065; DD 04

# Precipitation, total, inches

Most recent instantaneous value: 0.00 07-23-2008 15:00

#### USGS 02413000 LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER (US 27) AT CARROLLTON, GA.



Parameter 00045; DD 05

Create presentation-quality graph

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Title: USGS Real-Time Water Data for the Nation URL: http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?

Page Contact Information: Georgia NWISWeb Maintainer

Page Last Modified: 2008-07-23 16:43:11 EDT

2.46 2.04 ca03





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National Water Information System: Web Interface

USGS Water Resources

Data Category:

Geographic Area:

Real-time

United States

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News: Recent changes

# USGS 02413300 LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER NEAR NEWELL AL

# PROVISIONAL DATA SUBJECT TO REVISION

Available data for this site

Time-series: Real-time data

GO

THIS STATION IS OPERATED IN COOPERATION WITH THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



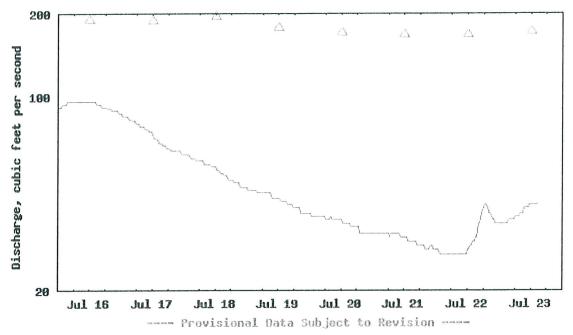
Available Parameters	Output format	Days	
All 2 Available Parameters for this site	Graph	7	
☑ 00060 Discharge	Graph w/ stats	(1-60)	GO
☑ 00065 Gage height	Graph w/o stats		
S 00003 dage height	Table		
	Tab-separated		

Summary of all available data for this site

## Discharge, cubic feet per second

Most recent instantaneous value: 41 07-23-2008 14:30





△ Median daily statistic (32 years) —— Discharge

Create presentation-quality graph

Parameter 00060; DD 01

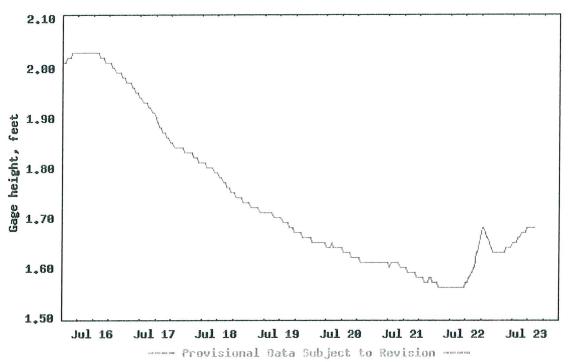
# Daily discharge statistics, in cfs, for Jul 23 based on 32 years of record more

	Most Recent	20th			80th	
Min	Instantaneous	percen-			percen-	Max
(2000)	Value	tile	Median	Mean	tile	(1989)
27	41	89	173	396	446	2430

## Gage height, feet

Most recent instantaneous value: 1.68 07-23-2008 14:30

#### USGS 02413300 LITTLE TALLAPOOSA RIVER NEAR NEMELL AL



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Parameter 00065; DD 02

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2.14 1.94 ca03

