

DRAFT – Sixteen Northwest Georgia Aquatic Species -- DRAFT

Effects Determination Guidance for Endangered & Threatened Species (EDGES)

Bartow, Catoosa, Cherokee Gilmer, Cobb, Dawson, Forsyth, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Lumpkin Murray, Paulding, Whitfield Counties

Species Covered by This EDGES and by the XXX Programmatic Biological Opinion:

- **Endangered:** Conasauga logperch (*Percina jenkinsi*), Etowah darter (*Etheostoma etowahae*), amber darter (*Percina antesella*), Georgia pigtoe (*Pleurobema hanleyianum*), interrupted rocksnail (*Leptoxis formani*), Coosa moccasinshell (*Medionidus parvulus*), Southern clubshell (*Pleurobema decisim*), Southern pigtoe (*Pleurobema georgianum*), and triangular kidneyshell (*Ptychobranchus greenii*).
- **Threatened:** Cherokee darter (*Etheostoma scotti*), blue shiner (*Cyprinella caerulea*), goldline darter (*Percina aurolineata*), snail darter (*Percina tanasi*), fine-lined pocketbook (*Hamiota altilis*), and Alabama moccasinshell (*Medionidus acutissimus*)
- **Proposed threatened:** Trispot darter (*Etheostoma trisella*)

These 16 species occur in South Chickamauga Creek, the Tallapoosa River system, and/or the four headwater rivers that form the Upper Coosa River system (the Conasauga, Coosawattee, Etowah, and Oostanaula). All require flowing water, stable stream channels with minimal sediment and algae growth, and adequate water quality to forage and reproduce. In addition, the listed ACT mussels require a specific host fish to reproduce – their larva, called glochidia, are released directly into the water and must find and attach to the gills or fins of an appropriate host fish to complete development.

Primary threats include increased impervious surface and stormwater runoff, increased turbidity and sedimentation, contaminants and hormones, loss of riparian buffers, reservoirs/culverts/dams that block movement up- and downstream, and reservoirs and water withdrawals that change hydrology. Many of the species are endemic to a single basin and have small populations vulnerable to natural or human induced catastrophic events (droughts, pollution spills, etc.).

Critical Habitat for these species has been designated in the mainstem Conasauga, Coosawattee, and Oostanaula Rivers from the Georgia/Tennessee border downstream to Rome, Georgia; in the Conasauga tributary, Holly Creek; and in the Tallapoosa River mainstem to the Georgia/Alabama border.

This EDGES covers (1) maintenance of existing structures and (2) new development, including roads, subdivisions, commercial development, water supply infrastructure, sewer mains, pipe and powerlines, stream restoration and stabilization (including mitigation) and similar projects. It does not cover new drinking water reservoirs, airports, or other large-impact projects.



Etowah darter (above) and fine-lined pocket book (below) displaying “lure” to attract host fish. The female discharges larvae that lodge in a host fish’s gills or fins to mature.



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Endangered Species Act Consultation Checklist:

Applicant:

1. IPAC indicates listed ACF aquatic species may occur in the project area.
 - a. No.....No effect. Provide IPaC information to the Savannah District with application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #2.
2. The Fish and Wildlife Service-Georgia Field Offices (FWS-GA) provided documentation evaluating habitat, potential presence of species, suitable survey methodology and/or potential project impacts (FWS-GA signed letter or sticker, T&E survey where FWS-GA provided concurrence with negative findings, or similar documentation).
 - a. No.....Provide completed EDGES Applicant Coordination Slip and supporting documentation to the Savannah District with 404 application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Provide FWS-GA project review documentation and/or survey data to the Savannah District with application/PCN.

Savannah District:

3. IPAC indicates Critical Habitat for one or more of these listed aquatic species has been designated.
 - a. No.....Go to #4.
 - b. Yes.....Contact FWS-GA to determine if consultation is needed.

4. The project is located in a HUC 12 where one or more of the NWGA listed aquatic species occurs (See GIS layer):
 - a. No.....No effect. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #5.

5. The project will require placement of dredged or fill material in a perennial or intermittent stream.
 - a. No.....No effect. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #6.

6. Quick email consultation with FWS-GA staff documents listed species are not likely to occur on or downstream of the site (based on previous survey records, location of dams/other fish passage blockages, size of upstream watershed, photos of stream, etc.).
 - a. No.....Go to #7.
 - b. Yes.....NLAA. Consultation complete. FWS-GA email response serves as concurrence.

7. Project Data (see below) are provided in the PCN or application to assist the Savannah District and FWS-GA evaluate T&E impacts:
 - a. No.....Request the information and, once received, continue with #7c.
 - b. Yes.....Share data with FWS-GA and continue consultation. If consultation results in a Savannah District' determination of:
 - i) NLAA, and FWS-GA concurs, in writing, consultation is complete.
 - ii) LAA, and FWS-GA concurs, initiate formal consultation.

Information to be Provided the Savannah District for Endangered Species Act Review

All (where applicable):

- Verification that the project will meet all requirements of the Georgia NPDES General Permits for sediment and erosion, construction stormwater management, and waste disposal.
- A post-construction stormwater management plan that meets at least the current Georgia Blue Book standards.
- A timeline documenting when land clearing, construction, and post-construction actions will be implemented.
- An estimate of total acreage that will be graded at any one time.

Urban development:

- Total acreage of the development and estimate percentage of impervious surface post-construction.
- Data detailing where riparian buffers will be removed or thinned to less than 50 feet wide on both banks.
- Location of new or improved culverts, bridges, dams, stormwater facilities, and utility crossings of streams. Data requirements for these structures, other than location, are listed below.
- The acreage of land that will be graded at any one time.
- Location of any point-source discharges.

New or replacement culverts in perennial stream (in addition to all data required in the current NWP Regional Conditions).

- Post-construction channel and bank stabilization measures, including revegetation plans.
- A description of grade or velocity controls to be installed, including riprap.

New or widened utility right-of-way (e.g., water main, sewer, pipelines, transmission lines):

- Methodology for each stream excavation (wet cut, dam-pump, flume, bore).
- Amount and source of hydrostatic test water and slurry water (if needed).
- Location where hydrostatic test and slurry water will be discharged (if needed).
- Location of new, replaced, or improved culverts or fords, either permanent or temporary.
- Post-construction channel and bank stabilization measures, including revegetation plans, and ROW maintenance plan.

Stream restoration/stabilization:

- Stream restoration plan (60% design, at a minimum, and including a detailed design longitudinal profile).