

2011's worst offenses against Georgia's Water



#10 Broad River: Waste Disposal "Farm" Fouls the Broad River

Just upstream from popular Clarks Hill Lake, and one of North Georgia's favorite paddling paths on the Broad River, Broad River Valley Farms (BRVF) each week spreads approximately 30 tractor trailer loads of waste—including livestock excrement, animal parts and grease to its 800 acres of land adjacent to the Broad River. Neighbors have been chased from their homes because of the stench, and rains wash the waste directly into the river. Yet to date, EPD has not acted to regulate the facility or require its operator to conduct any water monitoring to ensure the site is not polluting the Broad.

The River:

A tributary of the Savannah River in northeast Georgia, the Broad River rises in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in Stephens County and meets the Savannah in what is now Clarks Hill Reservoir near Elberton. The Broad River is one of the least developed rivers remaining in the state; 99 miles of it were recognized as pristine enough to qualify as part of the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Local canoe and kayak outfitters put thousands of people on the river each year, including at Anthony Shoals where the state-threatened Shoals Spider Lily grows.

The Dirt:

Companies that handle and dispose of waste are regulated by Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD). These companies must apply for permits and meet requirements to ensure that the waste is disposed of properly. But, at BRVF, John Hulsey, a well-connected businessman has





apparently worked the system so that his waste disposal “farm” operates without a permit.

Each week more than 30 tractor trailer loads of liquid and solid waste are dumped or injected into fields at the farm. Neighbors have been driven from their homes because of the stench from the operation, and an excavated channel drains runoff directly into the Broad River.

BRVF handles waste from another Hulsey-owned operation, LHR Farms, located in White County. That facility accepts human and animal waste which is dewatered and spread on site. Like BRVF, the White County facility has proven a nuisance to its neighbors. Some of the waste from LHR, including grease, oil, animal parts and sewage treatment byproducts seems to be separated and brought to BRVF for land disposal.

Despite these connections to potential contaminants, EPD does not require BRVF to test its stormwater discharges from its disposal site.

It may come as little surprise then that Hulsey is a major campaign contributor to candidates for state office. Since 2006, Hulsey has donated more than \$70,000 to the campaigns of numerous elected officials including Gov. Nathan Deal and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle.

What Must Be Done:

To stop the ongoing pollution of the Broad River, EPD must conduct a thorough investigation of BRVF’s operation, determine what pollutants might be present at the site and address the stormwater discharges to the river.



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