



The Satilla River

Satilla River Basin



The present name is a corruption of Saint Illa, the name given the river by Spanish invaders in honor of a captain in their King's army by that name.

Quick Facts:



- The Satilla River basin is composed primarily of the Satilla River, Little Satilla River, and Turtle River¹. Some major waterways in the basin include the Alapaha River, Seventeen Mile Creek and Hurricane Creek.
- The Satilla River basin or watershed, comprising all land areas draining into the river, occupies a total area of 3,940 square miles.

Population and Employment:

- The Satilla River basin includes part or all of 15 Georgia counties; however, only two are entirely within the basin. Waycross and Wray are two cities located in the basin.
- As of 1995, about 101,000 people lived in the Satilla watershed.
- Population centers in the Satilla watershed include the development surrounding Waycross, Brunswick and Douglas.
- Between 1975 and 1995, the population increased at a rate of 1% per year. The population is expected to grow at a faster than average rate from 1995 to 2050.
- The Satilla River basin supported 182,100 jobs in 1995. It is moving from a manufacturing- to a service-based economy.

Ground Water Resources:

Ground water resources in the Suwannee River basin are supplied by the Floridan aquifer system, one of the most productive ground water reservoirs in the United States. This system supplies about 50 percent of the ground water used in the state

Landuse:

- The 1988-90 land cover interpretation showed 37 percent of the basin in forest cover, 24 percent in wetlands, 2 percent in urban land cover, and 18 percent in agriculture.
- All major commodities that are grown in Georgia (peanuts, corn, cotton, oats, rye, sorghum, soybeans, and tobacco) are produced in the Basin.
- In addition to commodity production, animal agriculture is prominent in the Satilla River Basin.

¹ For management purposes, the State has used highways as the dividing factor for river basins in some cases causing the the Turtle River to be considered part of the Satilla River basin. However, the Turtle River basin is actually the recipient of fresh water drainage from "Big Buffalo Swamp" in Glynn County which still has connections to the Altamaha River basin. The Turtle empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

Biological Resources:

- There are 52 species of fish that live in the Satilla Watershed region and together they represent 16 families.
- Species diversity is limited by acidic water, low alkalinity, extreme variation in flows, and the relatively homogenous habitat present through most of the river.
- The Satilla River supplies major fisheries for redbreast sunfish and catfish
- The banded topminnow is a rare species that occurs in the basin.

Health of the River:

In the Satilla River Basin, there are approximately 19 rivers and streams listed on the 2002 303(d) list (from the Clean Water Act) as waters not meeting their designated use of fishing. These impaired waters include roughly 212 miles of rivers and streams in the Satilla River Basin. There are also 7 estuarine waterbodies not fully supporting their designated use of fishing, and approximately 99 square miles affected overall.

Tourist Sites / Significant Parks Pertaining to River:

The Laura Walker State Park is the only publicly owned lake in the Satilla River basin. This blackwater lake is approximately 110 acres in size and has fisheries for largemouth bass, bluegill, catfish, chain pickerel, and flier.

Photos and information on the river can be found at www.satillariver.com.

Get Involved

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