

News Release



Working together to share a common resource.

**For Immediate Release
April 1, 2021**

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TRI-STATE WATER GROUP READY TO MOVE BEYOND LITIGATION

ALBANY, Ga. –The ACF Stakeholders, a group of citizens representing a range of interests throughout the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river system, expressed relief that the lengthy and costly *Florida v. Georgia* case in the U.S. Supreme Court over water use has come to an end. The group has been working for over a decade to find a resolution to “the water wars” outside of the courtroom.

“Now we can shift the focus back to development of an equitable, stakeholder-supported water sharing plan for the ACF Basin,” said Phil Clayton (Eufaula, Alabama), the Chair of the ACF Stakeholders and the Director of Economic Development with the Eufaula Chamber of Commerce in the Middle Chattahoochee River sub-basin.

The ACF Stakeholders, Inc. (ACFS) is an organization made up of local governments, power producers, business and economic development interests, farmers and commercial seafood workers, manufacturers and conservationists throughout the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin extending from the Southern Blue Ridge to Apalachicola Bay. Members live in Alabama, Florida and Georgia.

“Since 2009, the ACFS has been working toward solutions based on sound science combined with transparent, consensus-driven decision making,” said Gordon Rogers (Ypsilanti, Georgia), the Executive Director of Flint Riverkeeper, a member from the Flint River sub-basin, and immediate past-Chair of the ACFS.

After six years and over 25,000 hours of work, the all-volunteer organization released the *Sustainable Water Management Plan*. The goal of the 2015 Plan is to share and more equitably manage the waters in the ACF River Basin.

“We raised more than \$2 million in private and other funding to develop 26 recommendations that the stakeholders agree can make a difference,” said Linda MacGregor, ACFS Vice Chair and Director of the Water Resources Department at the City of Gainesville, Georgia, in the Upper Chattahoochee River sub-basin.

The Plan consists of recommendations designed to be implemented together to benefit all stakeholders. They provide a starting point to improve the way water is stored, shared and adaptively managed across the watershed. The Plan also proposed developing a public forum—known as a trans-boundary water management institution—that would include official representatives from each state, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies and stakeholders. This new forum would provide a platform for all relevant stakeholders and the three states to discuss how to mitigate, and hopefully prevent, future water-related conflicts.

The stakeholders demonstrated that agreement can be achieved and that it is entirely possible to manage and share the water in this River Basin. However, all interests need to work together in good faith.

“Our Plan and the science behind it showed that even during extended droughts, there is enough water in the ACF System to sustain all stakeholder needs if management is performed equitably,” said Betty Webb, ACFS Treasurer member from the Apalachicola River & Bay sub-basin.

The ACFS continues to work towards the goals of the Plan, and is ready to collaborate with all interested parties. For more information about the work the ACFS does in Alabama, Florida and Georgia, and how to join, visit: <https://www.acfstakeholders.org>.

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The ACF Stakeholders’ mission is: To change the operation and management of the ACF Basin to achieve: Equitable solutions among stakeholders that balance economic, ecological, and social values; and Viable solutions that ensure that the entire ACF Basin is a sustainable resource for current and future generations. For more information, visit: <https://www.acfstakeholders.org>.