

Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed

What exactly is a watershed? A Watershed is land that drains rain or stormwater to a stream, lake, wetland, bay, gulf, or ocean.

The Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed is a unique and critical component of Mississippi's natural environment. The Chunky-Okatibbee watershed serves as the headwaters of the Pascagoula River Basin, which ultimately drains into the Gulf of Mexico.



What can you do to protect water quality in the Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed?

- Participate in community clean-up events
- Discourage littering
- Clean up and properly dispose of pet waste
- Maintain your septic systems properly
- Participate in area recycling programs
- Encourage elected officials to adopt policies and legislation to protect our water resources
- Notify local officials if you see conditions or activities that could contribute to water pollution
- Take time to educate yourself on the impacts of water pollution

Interesting facts about the Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed are as follows:

- Contains approximately 912 square miles or approximately 586,240 acres.
- Includes ecologically important waterbodies such as the Chunky Creek, the Chunky River, Sowashee Creek, Okatibbee Creek, and Okatibbee Lake.
- Features a 65-foot waterfall near Dunn's Falls on the Chunky River.
- The name "Chunky" is derived from a Choctaw Indian game called "Chanki" that was played with a round disk and sticks on the flat, sandy banks of the Chunky River.
- Features the Okatibbee Reservoir, which is a 3,800 lake with swimming, waterskiing, water slides, fishing, boating, picnicking, and camping.
- Contains a wide variety of wildlife including bald eagles, deer, rabbit, and alligators and documented sightings of 85 individual bird species.
- Includes over 25 individual species of fish.
- Reaches into five counties in East-Central Mississippi.
- A 26-mile segment of the Chunky River is designated as a "scenic stream."

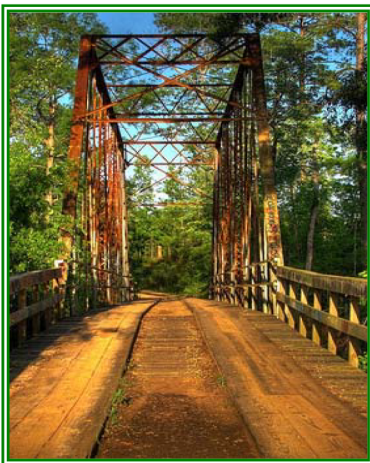
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During the summer of 2006, the East Mississippi Foothills Land Trust received a \$350,000 grant from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to develop and implement a watershed management plan for the Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed.

The objective of the watershed management project is to identify sources of pollution and water quality impairment in the Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed; to identify best management practices to address the sources of pollution and water quality impairment; to develop a watershed education and public involvement campaign; and to encourage acquisition, conservation, and preservation within the watershed.



It is the East Mississippi Foothills Land Trust's belief that the water quality and ecological health of the Chunky-Okatibbee Watershed is important to our culture, our heritage and our way of life. We anticipate the watershed management project to be a wonderful opportunity to raise the level of awareness in the area and actively address water quality issues of concern.



Technical Plan Components

- Watershed Mapping
- Recreational Access Improvements
- Litter and Dumping Management and abatement
- Water Quality Monitoring

Educational Plan Components

- Stakeholder Meetings and Presentations
- Coordinated Media Campaign
- Development of a Tabletop Display
- Participatory Activities
- Creation of a Website
- Placement of Watershed Signs
- Development of Eco-Tours

