



## March 2017 Newsletter



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**"Our economy is good enough, we better do something about our water resources, they're a mess!"**



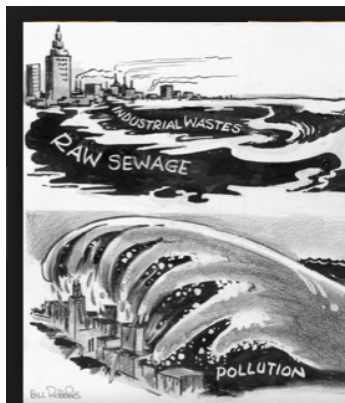
**"Our water quality is good enough, we better do something about employment, it's a mess!"**

### BY WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS

In March 1983, President Ronald Reagan asked me to return to Washington to run the Environmental Protection Agency. I had been the EPA's first administrator, from 1970 to 1973, and over the agency's first 10 years, it made enormous progress in bringing the country's worst pollution problems under control despite resistance from polluting industries and their lobbyists. A worried and outraged public had demanded action, and the government responded.

Yet the agency and its central mission came under attack during the 1980 presidential campaign. The Clean Air Act was criticized as an obstacle to growth. The agency was seen as bloated, inefficient, exceeding its congressional mandates and costing jobs. The Reagan administration and its new administrator were going to fix that. **Sound familiar?**

The EPA I returned to in the spring of 1983, some 28 months into President Reagan's first term, was dispirited and in turmoil. Its administrator, Anne M. Gorsuch, had been cited for contempt of Congress. Its budget had been reduced by almost 25 percent, with more cuts promised. Staffing had been slashed.



The recent upsurge of public concern over environmental questions reflects a belated recognition that man has been too cavalier in his relations with nature. Unless we arrest the depredations that have been inflicted so carelessly on our natural systems—which exist in an intricate set of balances—we face the prospect of ecological disaster.

— Richard M. Nixon —

There were internal conflicts, resignations of key officials, complaints of documents being destroyed and reports of secret meetings with officials from companies under investigation by the agency. One political appointee, Rita Lavelle, was facing accusations of lying to Congress, for which she would later be convicted. And voters were taking notice. President Reagan discovered that

government backsliding on protecting Americans health and the environment would not be tolerated by an awakened, angry and energized public.

While I awaited Senate confirmation hearings that April, several chemical industry chief executives asked to meet with me. I expected to hear complaints that over-regulation was stifling economic growth, just as I had heard 10 years earlier.

Instead, I was stunned by their message. The public, they told me, was spooked about the turmoil at EPA. Americans didn't believe anything was being done to protect their health and the environment. They didn't believe the EPA, and they didn't believe the chemical industry. These executives had concluded that they needed a confident, fair and independent EPA. They knew that an environmental agency trusted by the public to do its job gave their businesses a public license to operate.

A strong and credible regulatory regime is essential to the smooth functioning of our economy. ***Unless people believe their health and the environment***

***are being safeguarded, they will withdraw their permission for companies to do business.*** The chemical industry executives who came in to see me that day felt this loss of public support and were asking me to reassure Americans that the government would do its job to protect them.

Our collective freedom and well-being depends on a set of restraints that govern society and how it operates. Those restraints need to be clear and effective. They were not in 1983.

*The EPA's new administrator, Scott Pruitt, comes to his job with this historical backdrop. Are there changes that can be made to improve how the agency operates? Certainly. But those changes can never be seen as undercutting or abandoning the EPA's basic mission. That was the mistake made during the early Reagan years and why I was asked to return.*



One of the factors leading to the creation of EPA was the recognition that ***without a set of federal standards to protect public health from environmental pollution, states would continue to compete for industrial development by taking short cuts on environmental protection.*** The laws that the EPA administers create a strong federal-state partnership that has worked well for over 40 years. The federal government sets the standards and the states enforce them, with the EPA stepping in only if the states default on their responsibilities. Budget cuts that hurt programs states now have in place to meet those duties run the risk of returning us to a time ***when some states offered industries a free lunch, creating havens for polluters.*** This could leave states with strong environmental programs supported by the public at a competitive disadvantage compared to states with weak programs. In other words, it could lead to a race to the bottom.

Voters may have supported Donald J. Trump believing his campaign rhetoric about the EPA. But they don't want their kids choking on polluted air or drinking tainted water any more than Hillary Clinton voters, and as soon as the agency stops doing its job, they're going to be up in arms.

To me, the EPA represents one of the clearest examples of our political system listening and responding to the American people. The public will tolerate changes that allow the agency to meet its mandated goals more efficiently and effectively. They will not tolerate changes that threaten their health or the precious environment. These are the lessons President Reagan learned in 1983. **We would all do well to heed them.**





March 31 - Tifton  
April 3 - Macon  
April 4 - Macon RECERTIFICATION  
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April 17 - Savannah  
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March 28 - Norcross RECERTIFICATION  
April 4 - Macon RECERTIFICATION  
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April 19 - Savannah RECERTIFICATION

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March 17 - Cartersville RECERTIFICATION  
March 21 - Columbus RECERTIFICATION  
March 28 - Norcross RECERTIFICATION  
April 19 - Savannah RECERTIFICATION  
April 20 & 21 - Savannah RECERTIFICATION  
April 27 & 28 - Norcross  
April 28 - Norcross RECERTIFICATION

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ONLINE COURSES

STORMWATER CONFERENCES

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# **WHY IS COMPLIANCE WITH WATER QUALITY REGULATIONS IMPORTANT TODAY?**

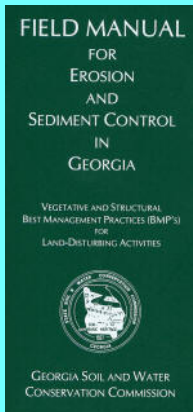


Seeing this makes me realize our population explosion is adding water quality challenges today that were non-existent when the Clean Water Act defined the threats to human health and the environment that needed regulation in 1972. Maybe it's time we strengthen parts of the Clean Water Act to

protect our quality of life and our watersheds. The longer we wait to properly maintain and protect our water resources, the more we will pay.

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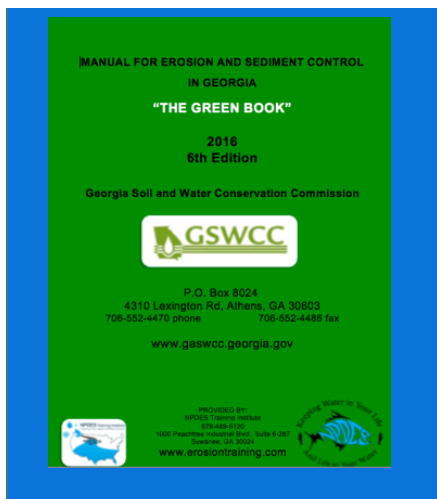
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AS OF JULY 1, 2016  
 ONLY THE 2016 EDITION  
 GREENBOOK CAN BE  
 USED in GEORGIA.



## THE TRUTH IS IN THE GRAY!

My family has proudly served in the US military and I personally served as a United States Marine. I love the United States of America and the freedom it has provided myself and my family, deep in my bones. I'm also a strong supporter for job creation and the importance of bringing business into our state and

local economies. That said, does that mean I can't be a strong supporter for federal, state and local environmental enforcement programs to make businesses accountable for polluting the water into which they discharge? Does being an advocate for business & jobs also mean I can't believe that enforcement of environmental laws is necessary to protect human health and our water quality? If economic growth is just as important as protecting our water, why is it that we allow our politicians to slowly degrade the laws that protect our water quality?



***Don't make the mistake of comparing controversial climate change regulations with water quality regulations.***

We can always debate the sources behind our worlds massive climate change shift, BUT **you can't argue the sources behind water pollution!** If the voting public

continues to allow our elected officials to bring in business for jobs and justify tearing down the regulations that make those businesses accountable for willing water polluters, what's in it for us? Where's the balance?

There was a day, only 45 years ago when the voice of Americans screaming for clean water and air was loud enough to drown out powerful lobbyists and make huge changes keeping companies accountable for keeping our water clean. Let's all hope we don't have to do that again!

T. Luke Owen, NPDES Training Institute  
*"Training That Helps It All Make Sense"*

## LOCAL ENFORCEMENT Is Critical to America's FUTURE Quality of Life

Our History with the Clean Water Act has proven over and over again that accountability for water quality permits is a must! It's clear to see the Georgia EPD is under funded as proven by the small number of inspectors they've employed in one of the fastest growing states in the country. America is tremendously reliant on local enforcement efforts that ensure our streams, rivers, lakes and coasts are protected.



## Research shows:

5% will violate water quality laws no matter what,

20% will comply with water quality laws no matter what, and

75% will comply only with effective local enforcement!

*"Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement of Environmental Policies"*

Cheryl Wasserman



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"Training That Helps It All Make Sense!"



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**March 5, 2012 Memo for Projects Less than 1-Acre**

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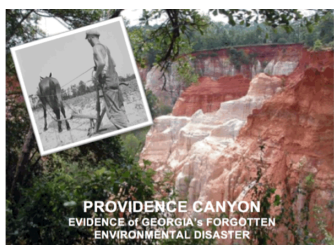




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[GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF WATER PROFESSIONALS](#) (UPCOMING CONFERENCES)



[GEORGIA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION \(GRWA\)](#)  
(UPCOMING CONFERENCES)



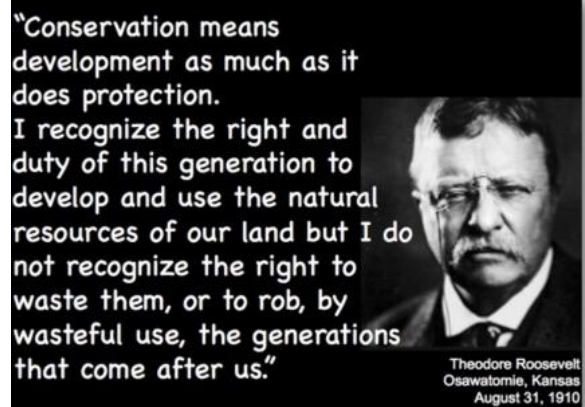
[INTERNATIONAL EROSION CONTROL ASSOCIATION](#)  
SE CHAPTER (UPCOMING CONFERENCES)



[WATER ENVIRONMENT FEDERATION](#) -  
WATERS WORTH IT! (UPCOMING CONFERENCES)

**HERE's TO TIGHT LINES & GOOD TIMES  
in Clean Abundant Water!!!**

*Respecting our neighbors downstream is what America is all about and it's the NPDES permit that helps us do that! It's OUR CHILDREN that will be living through decisions we make today. NPDES is an investment into our nations future generations so they can also have an equally great place to live, swim, fish, boat, and hunt tomorrow!*



**Sincerely,**  
NPDES TRAINING INSTITUTE

T. Luke Owen, PG  
President

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