



## **Georgia Water Coalition Membership Agreement**

### **I. Mission and Guiding Principles**

The Georgia Water Coalition's mission is to protect and care for Georgia's surface water and groundwater resources, which are essential for sustaining economic prosperity, providing clean and abundant drinking water, preserving diverse aquatic habitats for wildlife and recreation, strengthening property values, and protecting the quality of life for current and future generations.

#### The GWC's Guiding Principles

The members of the GWC work collaboratively and transparently with other Coalition members to achieve specific goals based on the above principles.

- A. Racism and other discriminatory biases are embedded in our society's institutions. This bias influences public resources, such as community processes, priority setting, and resource allocation. Pollution and toxins disproportionately impact the health of marginalized communities, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrant, and lower wealth communities. In order to ensure that every Georgian has access to clean water, biases and inequities must be addressed, and all Georgians must have equal opportunity to a seat at the decision-making table.
- B. The surface waters and groundwater of Georgia are public resources to be managed by the state in the public interest and in a sustainable manner to protect natural systems, meet human and economic needs, and account for the effects of climate change.
- C. Effective water management requires ongoing, rigorous evaluation and planning that is:
  - (a) transparent and informed by citizen input;
  - (b) based on watersheds, river basins, and aquifers;
  - (c) informed by the best available scientific data;
  - (d) reliant on uniform, consistently applied, and enforceable standards; and
  - (e) implemented, enforced, and timely revised as necessary.
- D. Shared waters must be apportioned equitably among all users to meet reasonable needs and assure the long-term sustainability of the natural systems on which those water supplies depend.

- E. Effective water management and allocation requires conservation as the primary management method. All Georgians must strive to become better water stewards for those living in a downstream area, adjacent state, or elsewhere in a given river basin.

## **II. Organizational Structure and General Responsibilities**

*Membership.* The GWC is a membership-based coalition and is not incorporated or registered as a formal organization. A GWC member is any organization that agrees with the Coalition's mission and guiding principles and agrees to adhere to the provisions set forth in this document. The membership develops policy recommendations by consensus to further the GWC's mission and guiding principles.

*Leadership Team.* The Leadership Team is empowered to prioritize certain goals and policy recommendations as opportunities arise, devise strategies and tactics to reach those goals, and remove members from the GWC when warranted. The Leadership Team adheres to policies and protocols set forth in the GWC Leadership Team Agreement, which upon request can be provided by the Director of Operations. Contact information for Leadership Team members can also be found on the GWC website: [www.gawater.org/leadership-team](http://www.gawater.org/leadership-team).

*Legislative Team.* The Legislative Team, which consists of the Leadership Team and other GWC members, is charged with furthering the Coalition's mission, guiding principles, and policy recommendations by advocating before the Georgia General Assembly. The Legislative Team adheres to policies and protocols set forth in the GWC Legislative Team Agreement.

## **III. GWC Membership Responsibilities and Expectations**

*Membership Decision-Making.* The general membership of the GWC meets two to three times each year for discussion, decision-making, training, and fellowship. Approximately every two years, the general membership reviews the GWC's mission and guiding principles, along with existing policy recommendations, and makes revisions and/or additions by consensus, which are then memorialized in a Biennial Report. Consensus is reached when each GWC member organization present at a particular meeting either supports a position or is able to live with a position. When consensus cannot be reached on any particular position, the position is held for further deliberation with the goal of eventually reaching consensus. Any GWC member may propose a new policy recommendation utilizing an online form during the revision process which typically starts in May of the year prior to publication of the report in January. The membership will vote electronically on the proposed issues in early September and any issue that isn't approved by consensus will be brought forth and discussed at the following November membership meeting. Those issues agreed on by consensus electronically and by all members present at the November meeting will be adopted and included in the revised report.

*Participation.* GWC members are encouraged to attend and actively participate in general membership meetings, especially when the membership is reviewing and revising the GWC's mission, principles, and policy recommendations. Members are expected to sign this Membership Agreement as a prerequisite for attending general membership meetings. Members are also encouraged to participate in and contribute to other GWC activities and initiatives, such as Capitol Conservation Day, the Dirty Dozen Report, and Clean Thirteen Report. GWC members are also encouraged to join or otherwise participate in the Legislative Team or issue-

based committees in which members have an interest or stake. For more information on joining the Legislative Team or an issue-based committee, a GWC member should contact any member of the Leadership Team.

*Communication.* The Leadership Team communicates with the membership in a variety of ways, including but not limited to web updates, email updates, social media channels, quarterly newsletters, and weekly legislative updates during the legislative session. GWC members are expected to read communications from the Leadership Team to remain educated on the latest GWC principles, goals, and policy recommendations. GWC members should always feel free to reach out to Leadership Team members to receive updates or ask questions.

*Supporting the Coalition.* GWC members shall strive to uphold the GWC's mission and to work collaboratively with each other to achieve shared goals. GWC members shall not take any actions that run counter to the GWC's mission, principles, and policy recommendations contained in the most recent Biennial Report. This is particularly important during the legislative session, when diverging tactics or messages can create confusion, stall momentum, and provide opponents with opportunities to create wedges or marginalize the GWC as a whole. Legislative priorities are presented and discussed at the fall membership meeting, after such time GWC members shall not take any action inconsistent with or otherwise intended to contradict or undermine the GWC's position in connection with any legislative priority.

To the extent that a GWC member does not agree with the GWC's position or strategy on a legislative priority, that GWC member must remain neutral and/or silent on the issue. A GWC member that elects to take action in knowing violation of this provision shall resign from the GWC, or that member may be removed from the Coalition by the Leadership Team according to the procedures set forth in the GWC Leadership Team Agreement.

At times, the Georgia General Assembly may consider water-related legislation that the GWC does not make a legislative priority. GWC members are free to advocate for or against such measures. In doing so, the GWC member must be explicit that it is advocating on behalf of the individual member organization, and is not representing or speaking on behalf of or at the behest of the GWC. In general, GWC members should make every effort to identify when they are speaking on behalf of or at the behest of the GWC, or when they are speaking for their own organization.

*Anti-Discrimination Policy.* The Georgia Water Coalition does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities. All Coalition members agree to treat each other with respect and professionalism.



By signing this Membership Agreement,

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(Print Organization Name)

hereby joins the Georgia Water Coalition and agrees that the GWC may identify this organization as a GWC member on public statements.

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Signature of Representative

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Printed Name of Representative

DATE

**Please fill out additional contact information for your organization on the back of this page.**

**Contact**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	
<b>CITY, STATE, ZIP</b>	
<b>COUNTY</b>	
<b>RIVER BASIN</b>	
<b>OFFICE PHONE</b>	
<b>CELL PHONE</b>	
<b>EMAIL</b>	
<b>WEBSITE</b>	
<b>HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT GWC?</b>	
<b># OF MEMBERS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?</b>	