

## Woodward Creek Visual Survey

Kevin McAuliff / Jimmy Davis; Thursday, September 16, 2010; Weather: Clear and sunny, temperature in the 80's.

**Updated July 21, 2011, Kevin McAuliff.**

Woodward Creek rises near the Bartow County line, and flows through primarily agricultural and forested land before its confluence with the Oostanaula River. Floyd County has a water intake in Shannon, which occasionally is shut down due to low flow. During the course of the visual survey, Operator Jimmy Davis frequently noted areas where he and others had had to destroy beaver dams, and indicated that there is a dense beaver population along the creek.

**Bells Ferry Road crossing** is adjacent to the Cooperative Extension Service's Northwest Georgia Experimental Station. The water is very slow moving, and the banks are eroded, precipitously in places. The water was tea colored in shallow areas to cloudy in deeper areas, but not opaque at the bridge site. Cattle are present in the vicinity, there was a large herd on the north side of the creek, east of the road, but a CRBI representative stated that the Station has implemented BMP's to keep cattle out of the water. Scattered herds were seen in nearby areas along Bells Ferry Road, including a large herd at the southeast corner of its intersection with Highway 140, an area that drains into the creek.

Bells Ferry Road View Upstream. A herd of cows was grazing above the precipitously eroded bank to the left.



Bells Ferry Road View Downstream



**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**



Bells Ferry Road Upstream: Water was higher than last year, and there was much aquatic vegetation. As was the case last year, a herd of cows was grazing above the precipitously eroded bank on the left.



Bells Ferry Downstream. Water higher and clearer than last year.

NWGRC staff re-surveying Woodward Creek found conditions at the Bells Ferry crossing not significantly changed from the previous year.

Water at **the intake in Shannon** is slow flowing and tea colored, but clear. The surrounding area is wooded up to the creek bank, with no pasture or other potential non-wildlife sources of fecal coliform noted. Periodically, flows at this location drop low enough for the intake to be shut down.

Water intake



Downstream view from water intake



### **July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**

In a July 25, 2011 phone conversation, John Boyd, Rome-Floyd County Water Department Utilities Supervisor, told NWGRC staff that conditions at the intake in Shannon were unchanged from the previous year.

The **Minshew Road crossing** is in a wooded area that appears to be somewhat isolated, though there is a nearby lake, formerly used for recreation. Just downstream from the bridge, is an informal rock dam, apparently intended to raise the water level to create a swimming hole. The water at the site is shallow, tea-colored, and clear. No pasture land or other potential non-wildlife source of fecal coliform is evident in the vicinity, and there are no residences nearby.

View downstream under the Minshew Road bridge crossing



Swimming hole



**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**



Minshew Road Crossing view downstream.  
Swimming hole is still there.



Minshew Road Crossing view upstream.  
The considerable aquatic vegetation was  
not present at the time of the visual survey  
in 2010.

NWGRC staff re-surveying  
Woodward Creek found  
conditions at the Minshew Road  
Crossing not significantly changed  
from the previous year. The water  
was higher and clearer, and there  
was much aquatic vegetation.

**Southwest of the intersection of Highway 140 and Thomas Bluff Road**, in a pine plantation, are two very large and modern chicken houses. According to the USGS Topographic Map, the chicken houses appear to be situated above or in a draw that drains into Woodward Creek. A branch downhill from the houses was evident on the property. There was no smell detectable on the property, but that the houses were modern and evidently very well-maintained, suggests that they are in use.

Water in the branch was shallow and clear.

Chicken houses



Branch below chicken houses



**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**

NWGRC staff did not access this private property in 2011.

**The Earle Property** is a fairly extensive holding of mostly forested land upstream from the Minshew Road crossing. The property is directly south of Enon Church on Highway 140, and there is what appears to be a partially harvested corn field visible to the south, between the highway and the creek. The same crop land can be seen from points on the Earle property, south of the creek.

The water is tea-colored, clear, and shallow at the points observed. The creek is accessible from the property only off of narrow dirt trails through the woods. There appear to be points of wildlife access along the banks. Jimmy Davis speculated that they could indicate the presence of beavers.

View downstream, with clearing visible in the distance.



View north across creek toward partially harvested field



**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**

NWGRC staff did not access this private property in 2011.

**The Gaines Loop (USGS: Dixon Road) crossing** is located upstream from the Earle property, southeast of Gaines Loop. The water is shallow, tea-colored, and clear. There are residential uses nearby, and a hayfield near the creek buffered by trees. Trails cross the tree buffer and slides down the bank are evidence that wildlife access the creek at this point. There is agricultural land in the vicinity, and there were herds on both the north and south sides of the road on the east side of the creek. It was not evident from the public right-of-way whether the cattle are fenced out of the creek or not.

View downstream from the Gaines Loop crossing



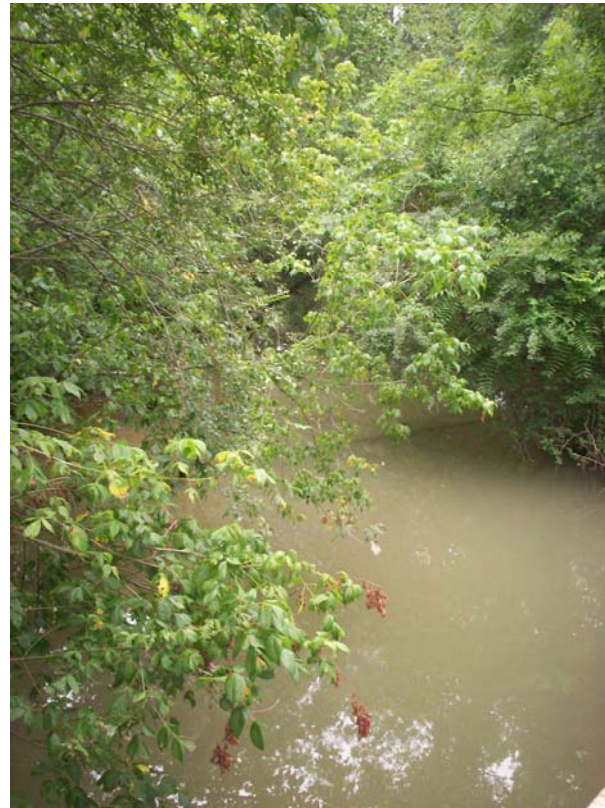
Hayfield bordering creek



**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**



Gaines Loop crossing view downstream.



Gaines Loop crossing view upstream.

NWGRC staff re-surveying Woodward Creek found conditions at the Gaines Loop Crossing not significantly changed from the previous year. The water was higher and murky, and the hayfield was overgrown.

**Northeast of the intersection of Peel Road (USGS: Norm Road) and Highway 140**, are at least four chicken houses that are for sale along with 100+ acres of associated land. According to the USGS map, the houses sit just above several intermittent branches that drain into Woodward Creek. According to Sherri Teams of the National Resource Conservation Service, the owners of these chicken house implemented Best Management Practices years ago, and have routinely exceed ordinary standards.

**The Highway 140 crossing** on Woodward Creek is situated upstream from the Dixon Road/Gaines Loop crossing. The flow is sluggish, and the water cloudy, an appearance possibly due to the depth of the water at the bridge, since it does not appear cloudy in shallower stretches downstream. At the crossing, the creek flows through woods, but there are nearby agricultural uses, including the four vacant chicken houses noted above, and vacant pastures.

From the limited vantage afforded by the public right-of-way, there does not appear to be much livestock in the vicinity, or throughout much of this watershed, and pastures and hayfields here and elsewhere appear to be severely drought ravaged.

View below bridge



Disused pasture near creek



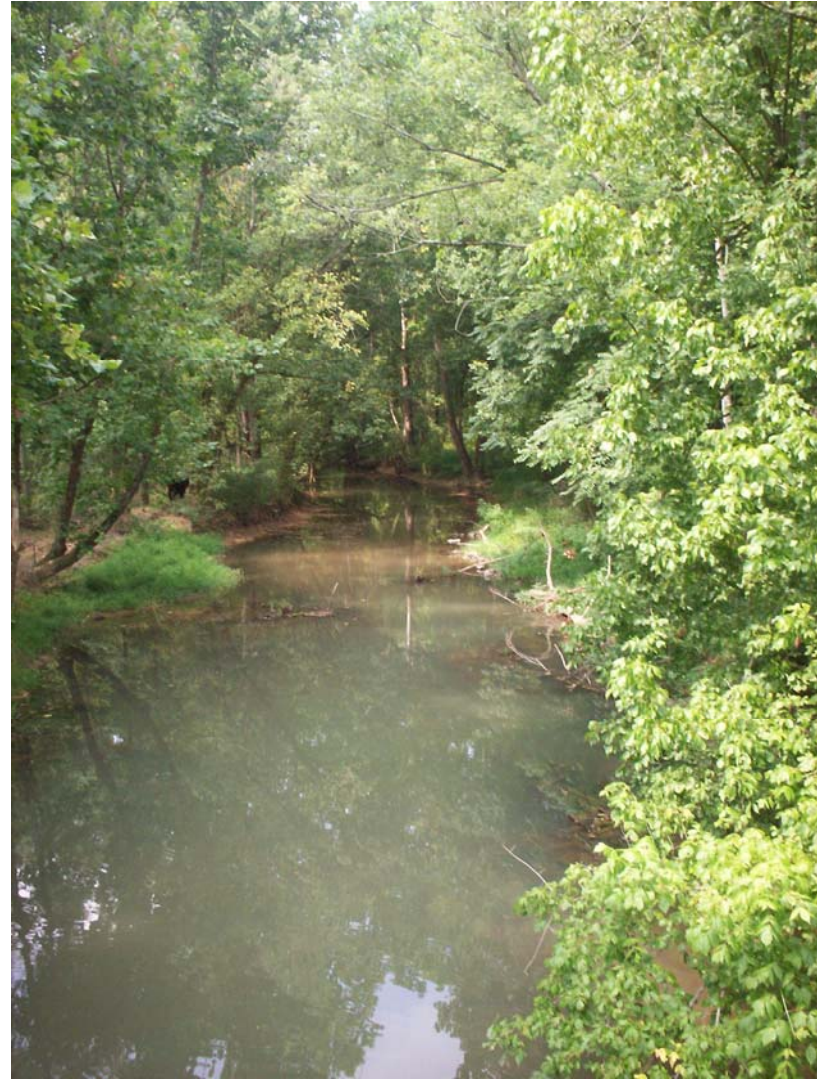
**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**



Above: View upstream at Hwy 140 crossing.

Right: View downstream at Hwy 140 crossing. A cow is visible as a black dot on the bank to the left of center. There appears to be a fence above the bank.

The water was higher than the previous year, and somewhat murky. Last year, no cattle were seen. There was no significant change in the vicinity of the crossing since the 2011 visual survey.

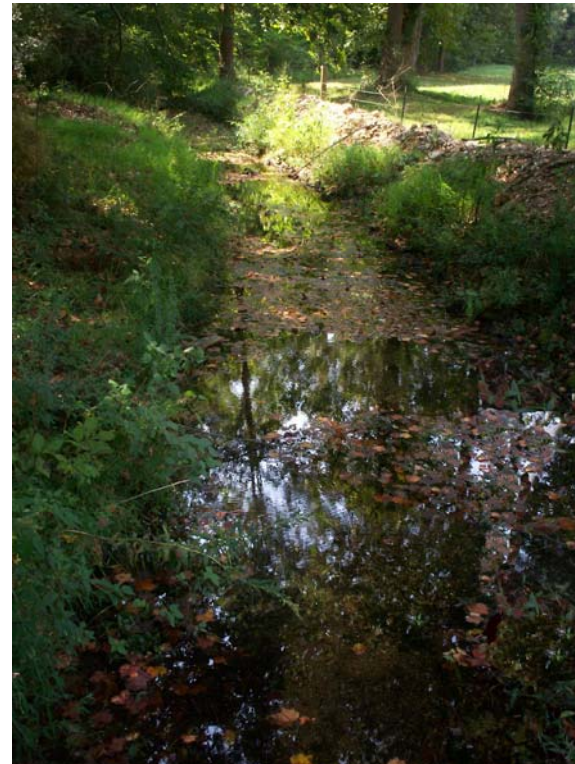


**Autry (USGS: Tanner) Road** runs eastward from the Calhoun Highway (Highway 53) roughly parallel to Woodward Creek on the creeks north side. The creek is not visible from the public right-of-way, but appears to be well buffered with trees. There are a variety of residential uses, and a few head of cattle seen. A large agricultural outbuilding and multiple loading ramps suggest that in the past there have been large herds here, perhaps moved to other pastures or culled due to drought.

The Autry (USGS: Tanner) Road bridge crossing is located at the junction of Autry and Kirby Roads, within about 500 yards of the head of the stream at the Bartow County line. The area is rural and agricultural. There are a number of trailers within sight of the crossing, three of which sit within a few dozen feet of the creek. Along about half its path to this point, the Autry Road corridor is a wide clearing in the woods. East of the crossing, both Autry and Kirby Roads enter the woods where the creek originates. Some cattle were seen in a pasture adjacent to the creek, but there was no way to see if they were fenced out of the water or not.

At the crossing on the day of the site visit (September 23, 2010), there was a shallow pool on the upstream side of the bridge, but the bed appeared to be dry as far as it was visible from that point. The water was clear, but had little flow.

View of cattle loading ramps and hay field on Autry Road.

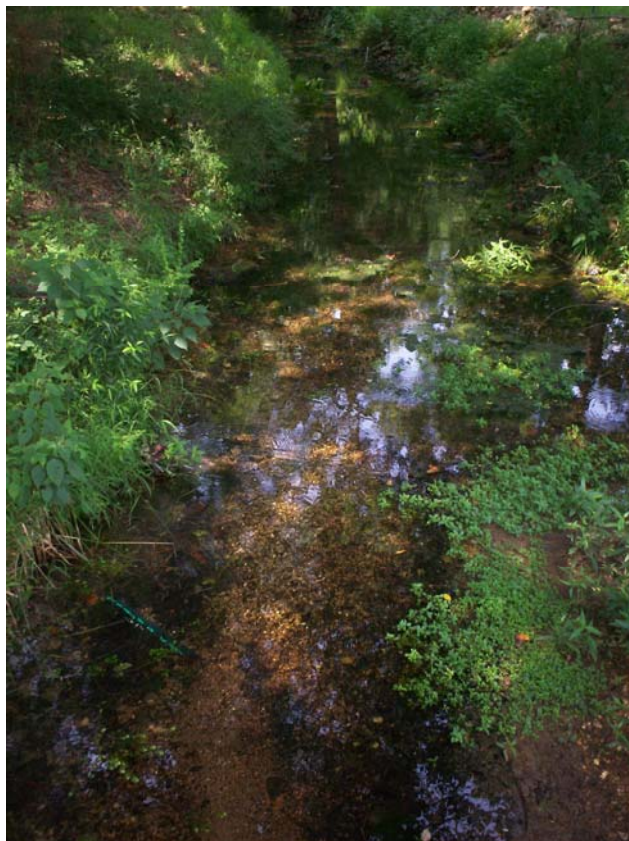


Downstream view of Woodward Creek at the Autry Road crossing.

**July 21, 2011 Update, Kevin McAuliff**



View upstream at the Autry Road crossing.



View downstream at the Autry Road crossing.

NWGRC staff noticed no significant changes from last year at this crossing. That there was water at the 2011 visit was a simple function of weather.