



GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

Land Protection Branch Update

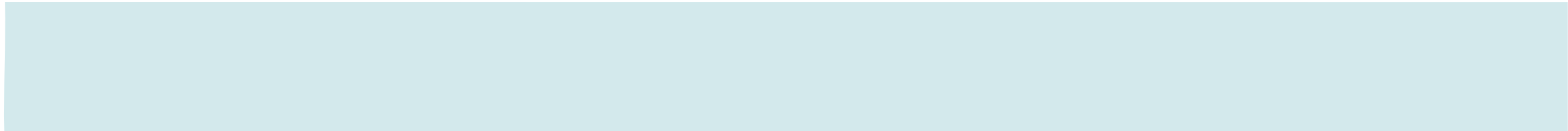
Sarah Visser, Chief

**AWMA
August 2025**



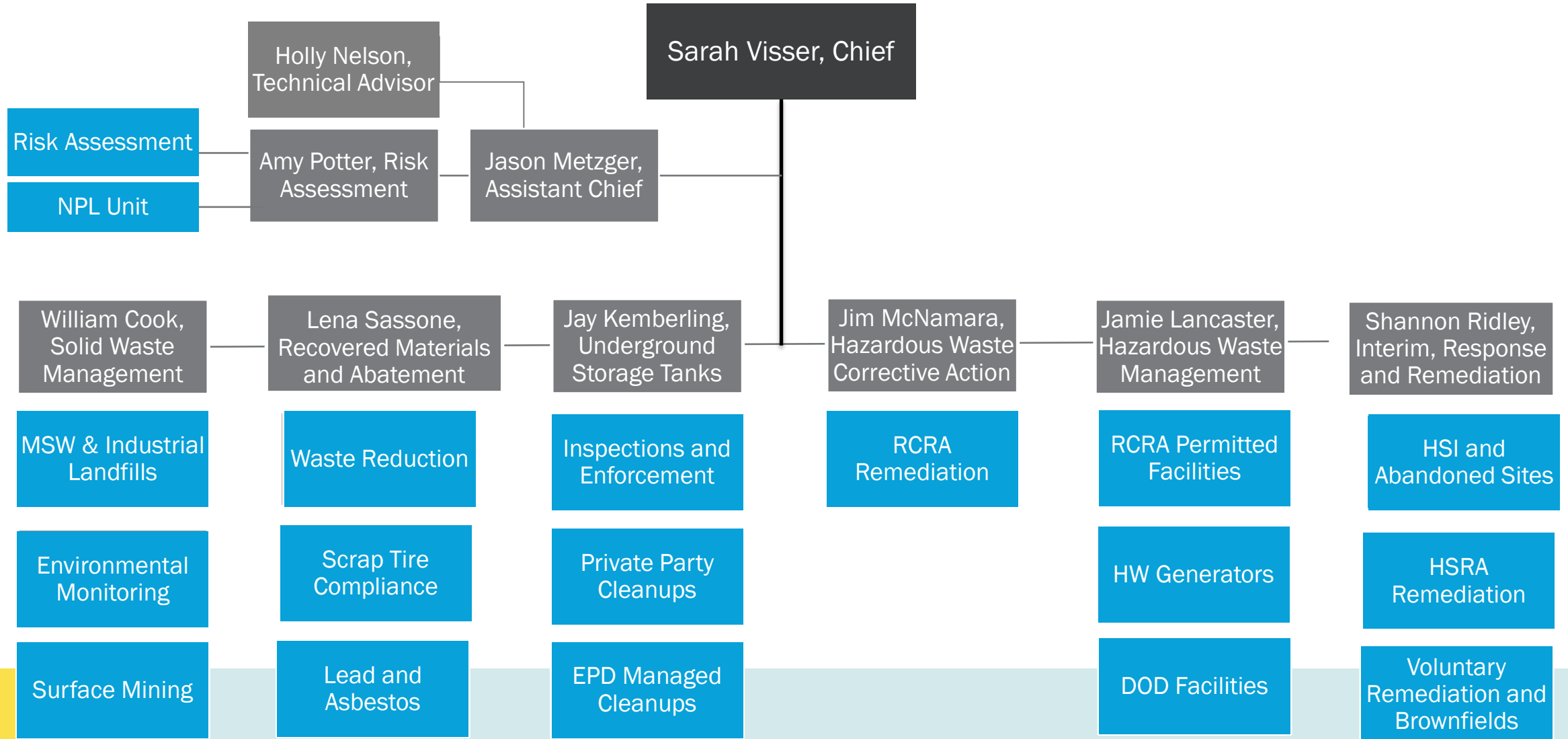
BRANCH STAFFING CHANGES

- **New Branch Chief,
Sarah Visser**
- **New Assistant Branch Chief,
Jason Metzger**
- **Interim Response and
Remediation Manager,
Shannon Ridley**
- **Technical Advisor Position,
Holly Nelson**





LAND PROTECTION BRANCH ORGANIZATION





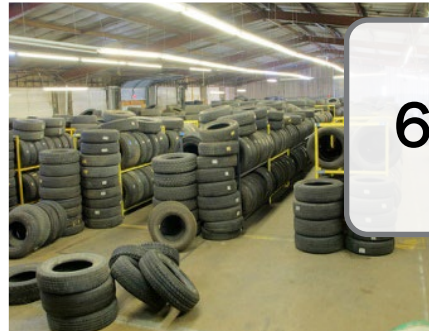
LAND PROTECTION BRANCH: BY THE NUMBERS

Underground Storage Tanks



30, 276

Scrap Tire Generators



6,720

Hazardous Waste Handlers



5,665

Licensed Lead Paint Firms



1,152

Surface Mining Permits



813

Hazardous Sites Inventory



428



LAND PROTECTION BRANCH: BY THE NUMBERS

Brownfields LOLs
Issued



785

Scrap Tire Piles in
Enforcement



68

RCRA Permitted
Facilities



57

NPL Sites



17

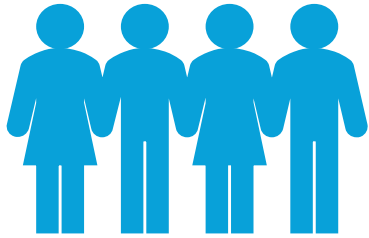
Active, Permitted
Landfills



195



BRANCH CHALLENGES



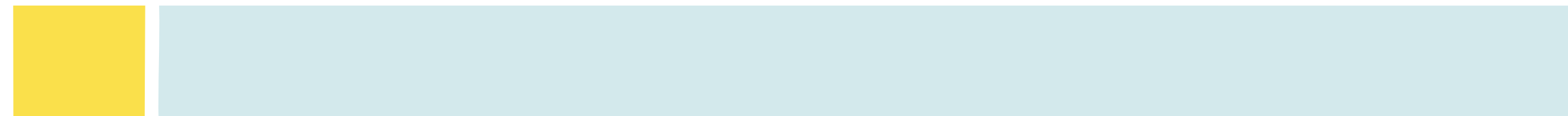
Relatively new staff/ limited institutional knowledge



In many programs, the less complex sites have been addressed. This leaves the sites with higher levels of complexity that take longer and cost more to cleanup.

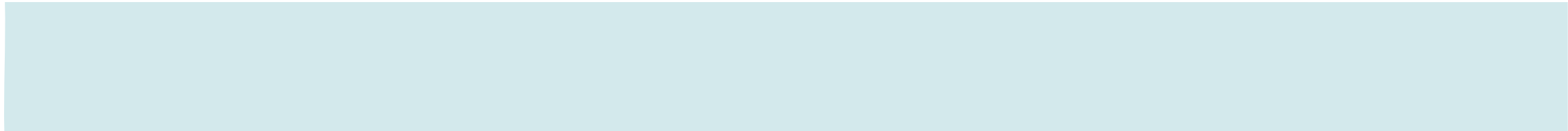


EPA Uncertainty including federal funding





MAJOR PRIORITIES





COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUALS (CCR) PERMITS

CCR Permits – Issued permits for closure by removal (10), closure in place (2), landfills (7), major mod (1). McDonough Ash Ponds 2/3/4 close in place, comments were due at the end of May. Received a substantial number of comments and working on our responses now.

We continue to monitor EPA's changes to the CCR Program and will consider future adjustments to our program as needed.



ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Twin Pines Permit – anticipate withdrawal of the applications**
- **Lithium-Ion Batteries, Solar Panels, and other emerging issues**
- **Expanded Trust Fund Programs**
 - **New unit in Response and Remediation for contractor cleanups**
 - **Additional grant funding for recycling and tire initiatives**
- **Guidance – Risk guidance and minor updates to VI and Leaching**
- **Standardizing our stakeholder and guidance development processes**
- **Identifying creative and protective ways to close permits on appropriate RCRA sites, transitioning to other programs**



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- **HB 351 Passed, Effective January 1, 2026**
- **Direct response to litigation involving EPD**
- **Clarifies the responsibilities of local governments in the permitting process – who is authorized to submit consistency letters, timing of letters, public notice requirements, etc.**





ANNUAL UEC REPORTING



Increasingly common to use UEC's on sites to control exposure

By end of 2024, EPD had 260 UEC's

Properties are beginning to change hands, and new owners aren't always aware

Most UECs already require annual reporting due to the controls on site

Process will be simple for simple sites with just a groundwater and/or residential restriction

Phase in process and more to come



HAZARDOUS WASTE TRUST FUND

- Established in 1992, dedicated by constitutional amendment starting in 2022
- Fees collected from generators of hazardous waste, solid waste tipping fees and fines for violations.
- Clean contaminated sites and reimburse local governments for old, leaking landfills.
- New Unit



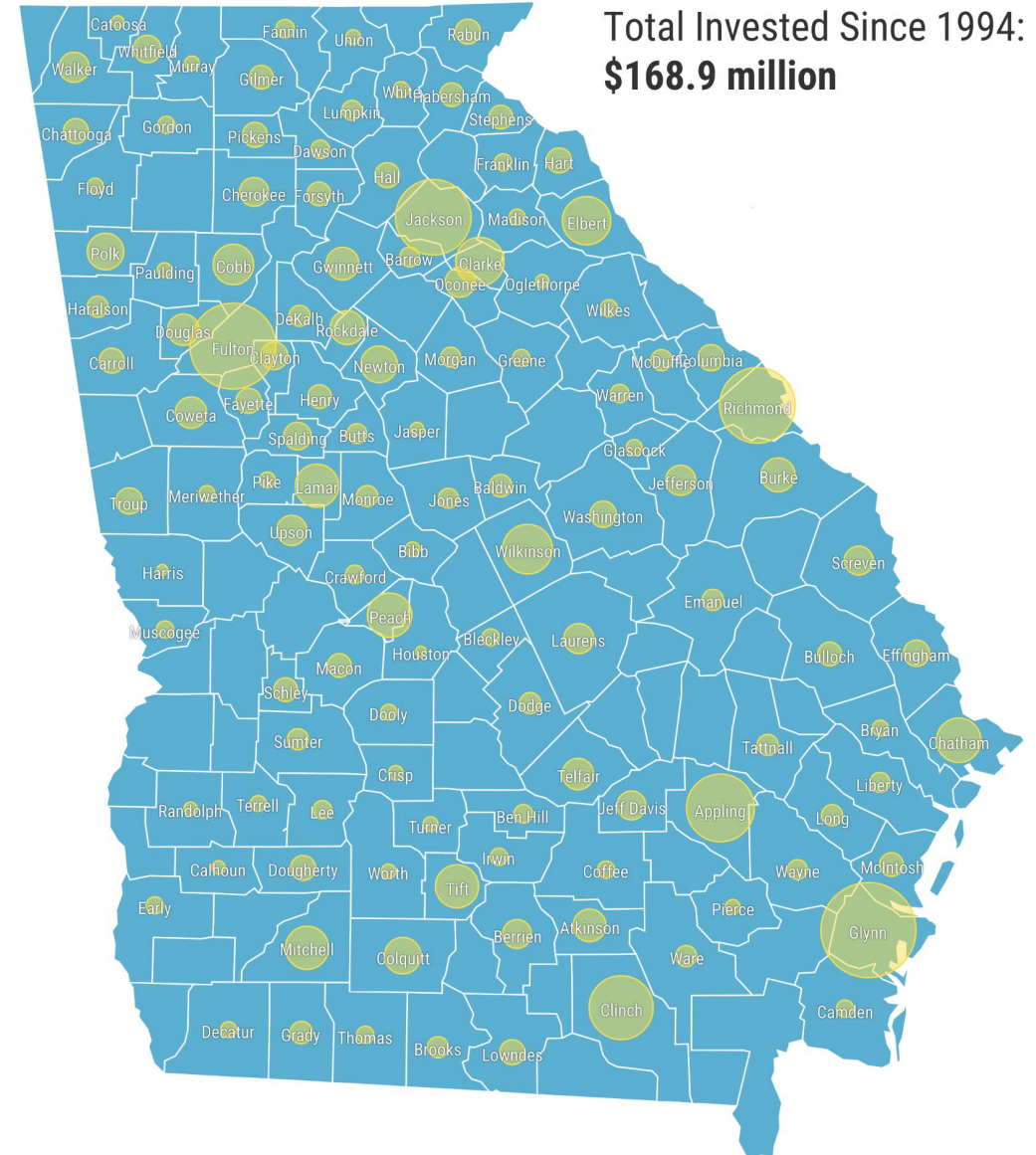


HAZARDOUS SITE INVENTORY

Since 1994, the Fund has identified
935 hazardous sites.

507 have been subject to emergency
action or removed after meeting
appropriate environmental
standards.

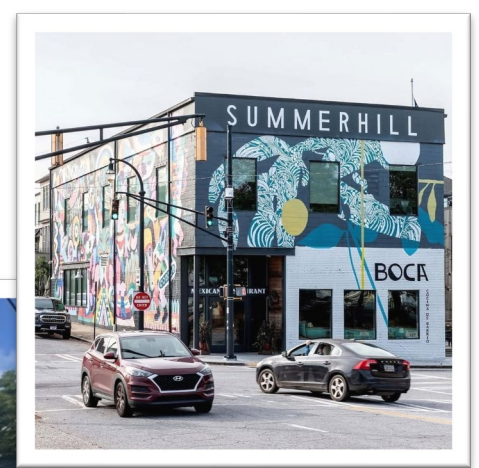
428 remain on the inventory. **63** are
classified as abandoned and will
need future state funds to cleanup.





HWTF SUCCESS STORY

- In July 2024, EPD notified of lead impacted yard in the Summerhill neighborhood of Atlanta.
- EPD performed incremental soil sampling at the property.
- Lead levels in soil found to be as high as 750 mg/kg.
- EPD utilized funds from the HWTF to excavate and dispose of lead impacted soil.
- Goal - prevent exposure of current and future residents in this area.





SOLID WASTE TRUST FUND

- Established in 1990, funds come from a fee on each new tire sold
- The responsibility for collecting and remitting the \$1 fee shifted from the retailer to the distributor effective July 1, 2023.
- Funds scrap tire management, scrap tire cleanups, abandoned landfills, emergencies at solid waste facilities, and grants to public entities.





SOLID WASTE TRUST FUND GRANT PROGRAM

Tire Products Grant (\$1.5 million+) - Funds the direct costs of incorporating scrap tire-derived products into projects that would otherwise use new or virgin materials, or for research projects to support scrap tire innovation.

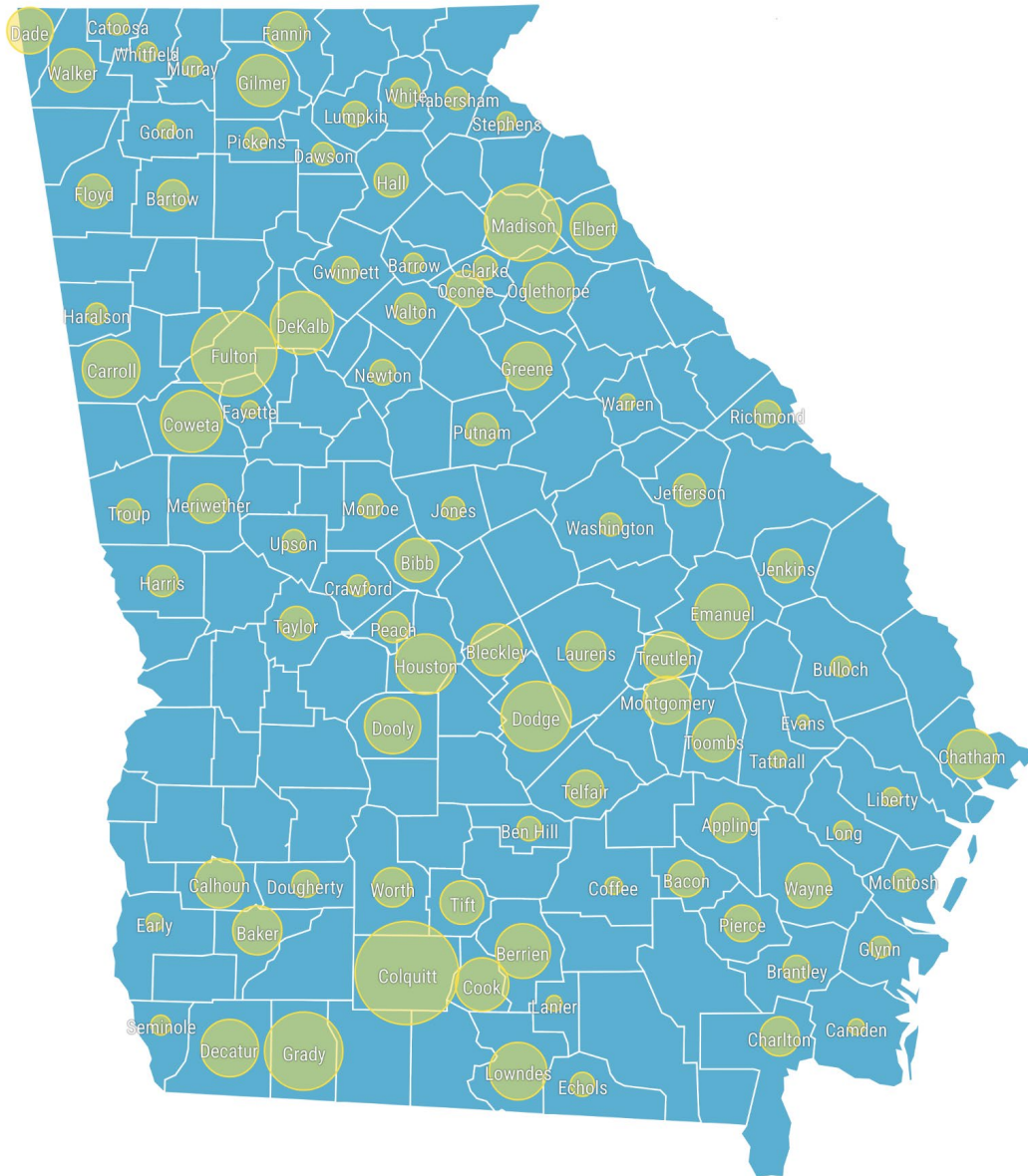
Recycling and Waste Diversion Grant Program (\$2.5 million+) - Funds projects to reduce solid waste, recover valuable materials, support manufacturing, and encourage innovation.

Local Government Scrap Tire Abatement Reimbursement (\$750k+) - Reimburses local governments for the direct costs associated with recycling tires abated in their communities. This program is non-competitive and funds are available year-round.

Apply Now! Due 9/30: <https://epd.georgia.gov/solid-waste-trust-fund-grant-program>



LOCAL GOVERNMENT REIMBURSEMENTS



Funding available for:

- Right of Way Cleanups
- Tire Dump Cleanups
- Collection (Amnesty) Days

Since 2016 the program has reimbursed local governments **\$5 million** to remove the equivalent of **1.75M** passenger tires!



GRANT SUCCESS STORIES



City of Cedartown – FY24
Installed pour-in place surfacing using 6 tons of tire-derived products, creating an ADA-accessible playground.



Athens-Clarke County – FY23
Launched Georgia's first residential compost collection program. Purchased a truck and collection carts and have composted 430 tons of organics.



Floyd County – FY24
Installed a shredder to process plastics and paper. Shredder is unique in that it can process books. Have increased plastic bale weight by 40% and recycled 216 tons of books.

Check out profiles of completed projects online!

Tire FY25: <https://epd.georgia.gov/tire-grant-fy25-cycle>

RWD FY24: <https://epd.georgia.gov/recycling-and-waste-diversion-grant-cycle-fy24>



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND GUIDANCE

Georgia Risk Assessment Guidance

- Four-year process with technical advisory committee - representatives from industry, EPD, EPA and others
- Comment period closed this week (8/20) and we're working on responding and revising the draft

Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee

- Convening for first meeting 8/25. First task will be the 5 Year Review Guidance



CAREERS AT EPD

- Work-life Balance
- Fulfilling and rewarding work
- Annual and sick leave accrual
- 13 Holidays per year
- Primarily work from home
- Alternative work schedules
- Minimal travel and in-state
- Variety of Healthcare Plans
- Combined Pension / 401K match



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION



<https://careers.Georgia.gov>



QUESTIONS?

