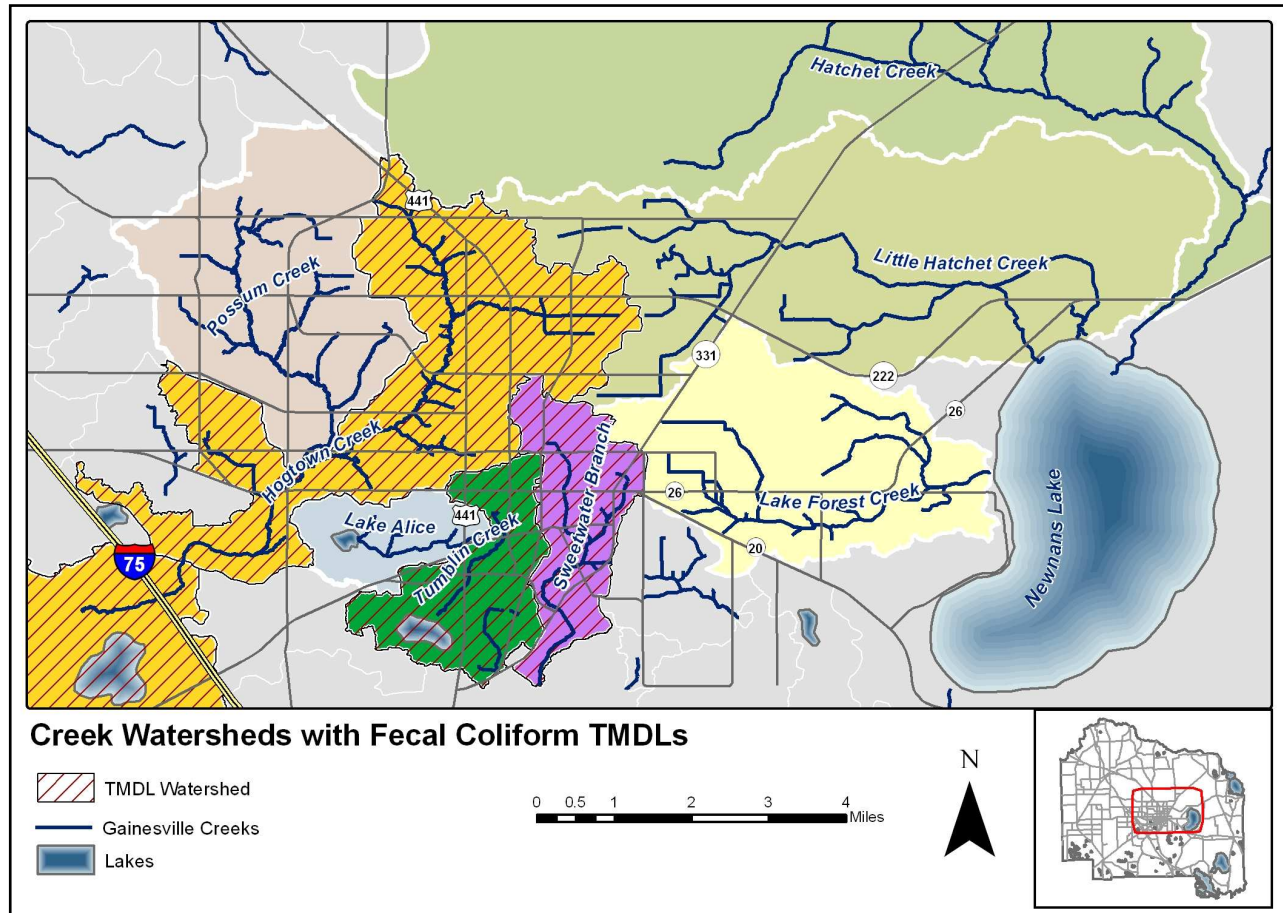




# Alachua County TMDLs~ Urban Creeks

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is required under the federal Clean Water Act to identify its “impaired” waters, which are waters that do not meet their designated uses. Most surface waters in Alachua County are categorized as Class III waters, which means they must be suitable for recreation and must support a healthy, well-balanced population of fish and wildlife. FDEP then adopts a **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)** for the impaired waters. A TMDL is the amount of a particular pollutant that a particular waterbody can ‘handle’ without violating state water quality standards. There are fecal coliform bacteria TMDLs for Hogtown and Tumblin creeks and Sweetwater Branch. For each TMDL the pollution sources and responsible parties are identified and pollutant reduction goals are set. The stakeholders (Alachua and Marion counties, the city of Gainesville, St. Johns River Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, University of Florida, and several environmental and community organizations) work together to create a **Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP)**, which is a guidance document for implementing the TMDL. Water quality is monitored to ensure that the plan is carried out and to measure its effectiveness. Once water quality standards are met the water body is removed from the impaired waters list.



## SUMMARY OF THE TMDL PROCESS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>PHASE 1</b> | Water Quality Monitoring   |
| <b>PHASE 2</b> | Compare Water Quality Data to Standards to Create the Impaired Waters List   |
| <b>PHASE 3</b> | Development and Adoption of TMDLs for Waters Verified as Impaired            |
| <b>PHASE 4</b> | Development of the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) to Achieve the TMDL   |
| <b>PHASE 5</b> | Implementation of TMDL(s), Including Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment |

# Where does fecal coliform come from?

Fecal coliform bacteria originate from the digestive track of warm blooded animals. Fecal coliform is indicative of fecal pollution and disease causing organisms.

Potential sources of fecal coliform bacteria include:



- \* failing septic systems
- \* leaks and overflows from sanitary sewer systems
- \* illicit discharges of sanitary waste
- \* improper disposal of pet wastes
- \* wildlife



## What are we doing about fecal coliform in our creeks?



- \* Alachua County Environmental Protection monitors water quality and conducts projects in the creeks to determine sources of fecal contamination
- \* Alachua County Health Department identifies priority septic systems for rehabilitation
- \* A homeowners guide to septic systems has been developed and distributed
- \* Gainesville Regional Utilities continues to test and improve the integrity of the wastewater collection system
- \* The City of Gainesville inspects stormwater collection systems for cross connections and illegal discharges
- \* Pet waste disposal stations have been installed at city and county parks and a pet waste information pamphlet has been created

## What can I do?

- \* Pick up pet waste and flush it down the toilet, bury it in the yard, or put it in the trash
- \* Maintain your septic system by:
  - o having it inspected every 2-3 years and pumped as recommended
  - o disposing of hazardous and pharmaceutical wastes at the Alachua County Hazardous Waste Collection center (352-334-0440)
- \* Prevent sewer spills by putting cooking grease in the trash instead of down the drain
- \* Report suspect pipes, illegal connections, and dumping to 352-264-6800



For additional information contact Alachua county Environmental Protection Department at 352-264-6800 or visit <http://environment.alachua.fl.us>