



SOUTHERN INSTREAM FLOW NETWORK FACT SHEET



Rivers and streams of the Southeastern US are home to a globally significant array of fish, mussels, crayfish, and other life. The natural seasonal and inter-annual variations of water levels in rivers and streams are critical to maintenance of these rich aquatic ecosystems. As a consequence of the widespread impacts of increased water withdrawals and dam operations, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), an affiliate of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, identified implementation of protective instream flow policies as a priority strategy in the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan. The Southern Instream Flow Network (SIFN) was developed to address the impacts of flow alterations in the region's aquatic ecosystems.

Because instream flow policies are administered at the state level and lack national standards to protect natural systems, SARP envisioned SIFN to leverage policy and technical experience and science-based resources among state-based partnerships in the 15 Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) states – AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MO, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV.

The SIFN goal is to help develop and improve protective instream flow policies by providing science-based resources and opening lines of communication. In support, work follows these objectives:

- Educate participants on the scientific basis of instream flow policy;
- Facilitate communication within and among states to support and build on experiences;
- Produce and share instream flow policy-related tools and resources specific to state needs; and
- Provide training for use of assessment tools to determine environmental impacts of altered hydrologic regimes and develop instream flow standards.

In its first two years, SIFN has:

- Facilitated communication among agencies within 10 states about management of instream flows through formation of state teams;
- Sponsored workshops and WebExs on important instream flow topics and resources to facilitate information exchange between states;
- Provided a website and web portal to serve as clearinghouses of instream flow technical and education/outreach resources;
- Developed instream flow messages for water managers based on the aquatic wealth of the region; and
- Initiated the Southern Instream Flow Research Agenda to guide regional institutions and funding sources towards priority instream flow research needs.

For more information, visit www.southeastaquatics.net/programs/sifn/ or contact Scott Robinson, the SARP Coordinator, at 770-361-5639 or scott_robinson@dnr.state.ga.us.

Funding for the Southern Instream Flow Network is provided by a Multi-State Conservation Grant through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the US Fish and Wildlife Service