



SOUTHERN INSTREAM FLOW NETWORK (SIFN)

Rivers of the southeastern United States are home to a globally significant array of fish, mussels and other life. The natural seasonal and inter-annual variations of water levels are critical to the maintenance of these rich aquatic ecosystems. As a consequence of the widespread impacts of increased uses of surface water and climate changes in the region, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) identified implementation of protective instream flow policies as a priority strategy in its Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan. SARP developed the Southern Instream Flow Network (SIFN) to address the impacts of flow alterations in the region's aquatic ecosystems. SIFN leverages policy, technical experience, and scientific resources among partners based in 15 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 scientific resources and opening lines of communication.



Key objectives in support of SIFN's goal:

- ◆ **Provide** scientific resources by accessing and sharing regional, national and global expertise through a website, regional workshops, WebExs, and participation in national instream flow conferences.
- ◆ **Implement** the Southern Instream Flow Research Agenda to advance the scientific basis for developing instream flow policy.
- ◆ **Facilitate** regional and local communication among water management professionals to build support and expand awareness of the value of protective instream flow policy.
- ◆ **Enable** effective communication with stakeholders, policy makers, and the general public through messaging tools on the role and value of instream flows to maintain the aquatic wealth of the southeast region.

Future work, described in SIFN's Research Agenda, guides regional institutions and funding sources towards priority instream flow research needs. In 2011, SIFN will help establish a regional river classification framework, compile data about aquatic life, and assess flow alterations across southern rivers. By clarifying how the flow ecology of southern rivers responds to flow alterations, the outcomes of the Research Agenda will provide a scientific basis for including instream flow strategies in water policy and management.

To learn more about SIFN and instream flow, visit www.southeastaquatics.net/programs/sifn or contact Mary Davis, SIFN Technical Advisor, at davismarym@bellsouth.net or 404-377-6835. For more information about SARP, visit www.southeastaquatics.net or contact Scott Robinson, SARP Coordinator at scottr@southeastaquatics.net or 770-918-6418.

Funding for SIFN is provided by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Department of the Interior. This publication was funded by the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (grant # TN-M-4-C), a program supported with funds from the Sport Fish Restoration Program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and jointly managed with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

