

# Sharing the Water

*in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia*

I am sending this brochure to you because of your previous interest in projects that may affect our shared water resources in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. This brochure provides information about new opportunities for you to get involved in shaping how decisions about this water are made.

Water allocation formulas will soon be developed for the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa (ACT) and Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint (ACF) river basins by the states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in cooperation with other state and federal agencies, will prepare two environmental impact statements (EISs), one for each basin, to address the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects of these formulas.

The EISs will use an environmental analysis framework, based on the data and tools produced by the ACT and ACF Comprehensive Study, to evaluate alternative plans for sharing water resources within the ACT and ACF river basins. Then a Federal Commissioner will consider these effects and decide whether to concur or nonconcur with the states' proposed water allocation formulas.

These future water allocation decisions might affect you and other people and resources of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Your involvement through comments and suggestions will help all of us, the state and federal agencies, make better decisions on how your future water resources needs can be met.

If you'd like more information, take a moment and read through the remainder of this brochure. In any case, please fill out and mail in the enclosed questionnaire (the postage is already paid for you). Your participation in this process will assist in our evaluation of the effects of the proposed water allocation formulas.

Thank you for your participation!

William S. Vogel  
Colonel, District Engineer



### River Basin Locations

The ACT and ACF river basins originate in Georgia and terminate in Alabama and Florida, respectively.



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mobile District



**Public Comment** *Input from the public is essential to formulating an effective plan for sharing the water in the ACT and ACF river basins.*

## Your Involvement is Key to Success

Here's how you can get involved in the EIS process. First, take a moment to read through this brochure. Included is information about the history and need for an interstate plan to share water resources in the ACT and ACF basins and the environmental review process.

Your comments are invited any time throughout the EIS preparation process. However, some formal comment opportunities include:

- Completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire
- Attending public workshops during the EIS process (to be announced separately)
- Sending written comments to the Corps at the addresses listed at the end of this brochure or through our Web site at <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/pd/act&acfeis>
- Faxing comments to the Corps at 334/694-3815
- Sending comments on the draft EISs scheduled to be released in October 1998.

For more information about the EIS process or the ACT and ACF basins, please contact the Corps representatives listed on the back of this brochure.

## About the River Basins

The ACT and ACF basins originate in northern Georgia and terminate in Alabama and Florida, respectively. During the past 160 years, these basins have been developed to meet various water demands, including drinking water supply, flood control, hydropower, navigation, fish and wildlife conservation, and recreation. Ten multi-purpose reservoirs are operated by the Corps in the basins, as are 21 non-federal reservoirs.

### Increased Demands Raised Questions

Rapid growth in north Georgia has caused large increases in water demands. As a result, in the 1980s, the Corps received requests from north Georgia municipalities to reallocate the water stored in the federal reservoirs. Also, droughts during the 1980s heightened the public's concern about water resource management in the ACT and ACF basins. Subsequently, Alabama filed litigation challenging the proposed reallocations. The states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia and the Corps met to resolve this conflict, leading to the Comprehensive Study of water resources in the ACT and ACF basins, which began in 1992.

### Comprehensive Water Resource Study Was First Step

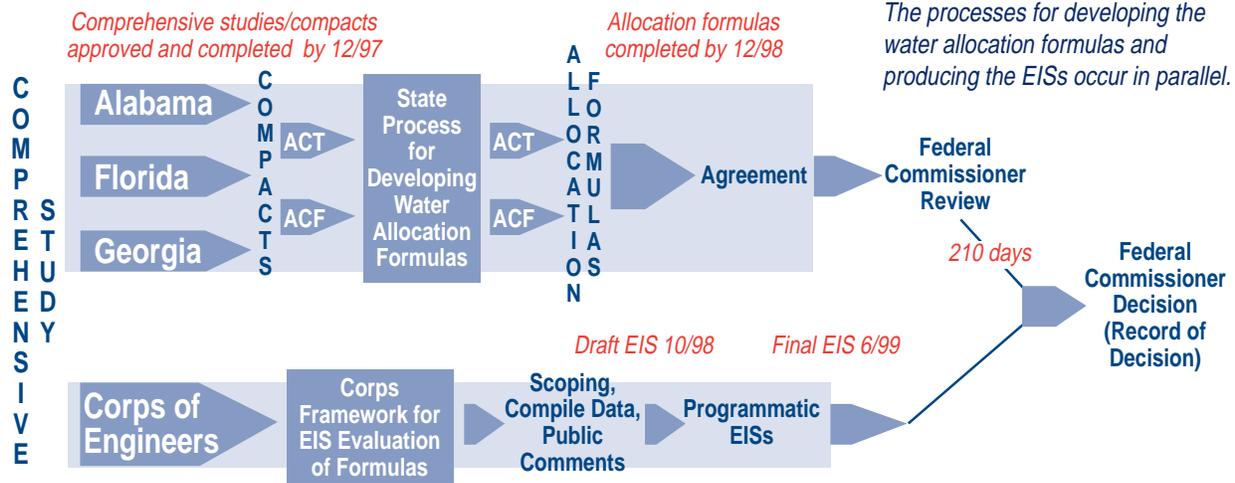
The goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Study are to:

- Determine the capabilities of and demands on the water resources of the basins.
- Develop technical information, strategies, and plans.
- Provide basin-specific tools to evaluate water management alternatives.
- Evaluate alternatives that affect the water resource uses.
- Recommend a formal mechanism to coordinate long-term basin-wide management and use of water resources to meet the environmental, public health, and economic needs of the basins.

Many of the Comprehensive Study elements have been completed, and the balance are expected to be complete by December 1997 or shortly thereafter.



### Parallel Processes



## Interstate Agreements Pave the Way

The states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia have approved interstate compacts for the ACT and ACF basins to address management of water resources. The purpose of these compacts is to promote interstate use, reduce controversy, equitably apportion the surface waters of the basins, promote water planning, and develop and share common databases. The compacts will establish a commission for each basin consisting of the Governor from each state and a Federal Commissioner. The compacts are currently awaiting U.S. Congressional approval.

Under the compacts, the states will develop water allocation formulas that will be evaluated by the Federal Commissioner. The states will be requesting public input during their deliberations. The states must approve the water allocation formulas for the two basins no later than December 1998, and the Federal Commissioner must submit a letter to accept or reject the water allocation formulas within 210 days of approval by the state commissions. An additional 45 days will be allowed to resolve differences if determined necessary.

## Understanding the EIS Process

All federal evaluations of the formulas for each basin, including environmental evaluations, must be completed within a specific timeframe to assist the Federal Commissioner in his or her decision. These EISs must address the impacts, or range of impacts, that could result from implementing the formulas.

The technical information and tools developed under the Comprehensive Study will be used by the states to develop water allocation formulas

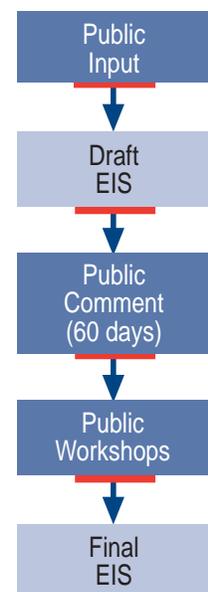
and in the upcoming EISs to evaluate the potential impacts of the formulas. A separate EIS will be prepared for both the ACT and ACF basins.

Because of the broad geographic areas associated with the two river basins and because the water allocation formulas may not be available from the states until late 1998, a programmatic approach will be used to develop each EIS. Using hydrologic models developed during the Comprehensive Study, the draft EIS will evaluate a potential range of stream flows at established locations within each basin that would likely occur from the various alternative allocation formulas. Potential environmental impacts will then be identified for existing flows and projected ranges of flows, taking into account future water demands within the basins. This information will provide the framework to assess the impacts of the actual water allocation formulas, once they are proposed by the states.

Public involvement is a key objective for any EIS. Public input can include suggestions or comments on the range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS, significant issues, and the scope of the EIS studies. We are asking for your input now and throughout the process. Public comment will also be received at public workshops to discuss the draft EIS, which should occur in October 1998.

### EIS Process

*Public involvement occurs throughout the EIS process.*





## Want more information?

If you need more information, or if you have questions or would like to comment on any of the information in this brochure or accompanying questionnaire, please contact either of the Corps' representatives below:

### **Mike Eubanks**

ACT River Basin Project Manager  
Inland Environmental Section  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District-Mobile  
P.O. Box 2288  
Mobile, AL 36628-0001  
334/694-3861  
michael.j.eubanks@sam.usace.army.mil

### **Joanne Brandt**

ACF River Basin Project Manager  
Inland Environmental Section  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District-Mobile  
P.O. Box 2288  
Mobile, AL 36628-0001  
334/690-3260  
joanne.u.brandt@sam.usace.army.mil

Brief messages may be left on this toll-free line: 1-800-421-7637, or delivered by facsimile at 334/694-3815. For current information, visit the Mobile District Web page at <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/pd/actacfeis>.



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Inland Environmental Section  
P.O. Box 2288  
Mobile, AL 36628-0001

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