



*Northwest
Atlanta's Proctor
Creek
Watershed:
From Peril to
Possibilities*

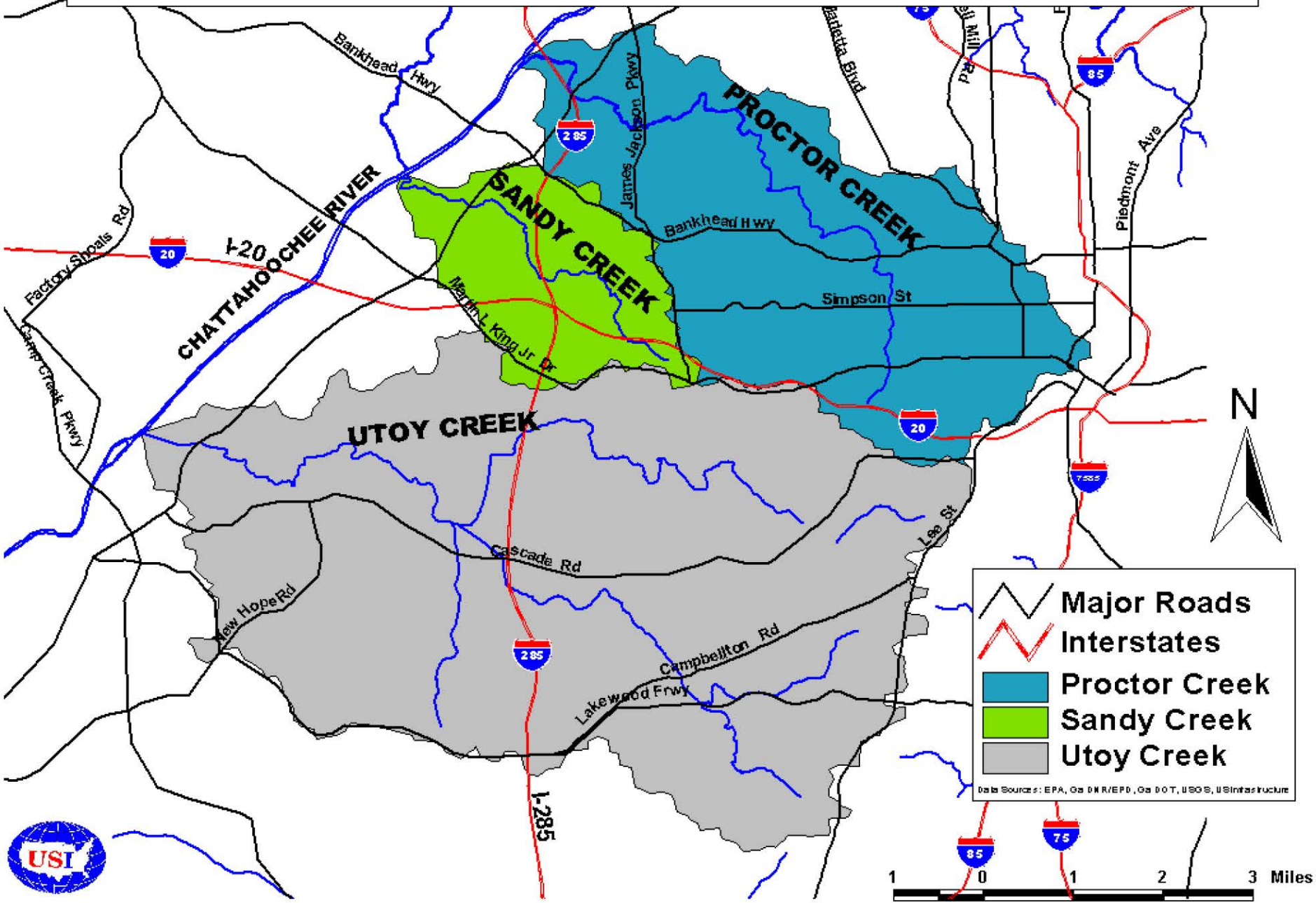
**Na'Taki Osborne Jelks, Ph.D.c, MPH
West Atlanta Watershed Alliance**

West Atlanta Watershed Alliance



*Building a
Cleaner,
Greener,
Healthier &
More
Sustainable
West Atlanta*

Proctor, Sandy, and Utoy Watersheds



Guiding Principle of Authentic Community Engagement & Collaboration

□ **PROCESS** is just
as important as
results!

WAWA's Work

- In the late 1990's/early 2000's WAWA, in collaboration with West Atlanta residents and stakeholders from across Metro Atlanta, led community efforts to close one of two CSO facilities in the Proctor Creek Watershed.
- Since our founding, we have elevated the challenges and opportunities in the Proctor Creek Watershed...sometimes as “the lone voice crying in the wilderness.”

An Urban Waters Capacity-Building Grant Supported the Formation of the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council



- *Convened by WAWA*
- *Organized in Collaboration with Community Improvement Association and Environmental Community Action (Eco-Action)*

Our Motivation

- Watershed residents want to play a role in addressing environmental and human health hazards in the watershed.
- The community is seeking to restore its vitality, health, and stability by leading community restoration efforts.
 - ▣ We believe that **we can** clean up, protect and restore Proctor Creek for ourselves, our children, and our downstream neighbors.
 - ▣ **We can** become informed and engaged community leaders to rollback pollution, and become advocates for the protection and restoration of the Proctor Creek Watershed.

A Proctor Creek In Peril



- Proctor Creek used to be a source of pride for West Atlanta communities – a place where children played, a place where people could fish, and a place where people were baptized.

- Proctor Creek is now one of the most environmentally impaired creeks in metro Atlanta.
 - ▣ Today, Proctor Creek is impacted by at least **29** documented pollution sources and does not meet state-mandated water quality requirements (including that for E.Coli).
 - The creek does not meet its “designated use” for fishing.

Proctor Creek: A Sense of Place

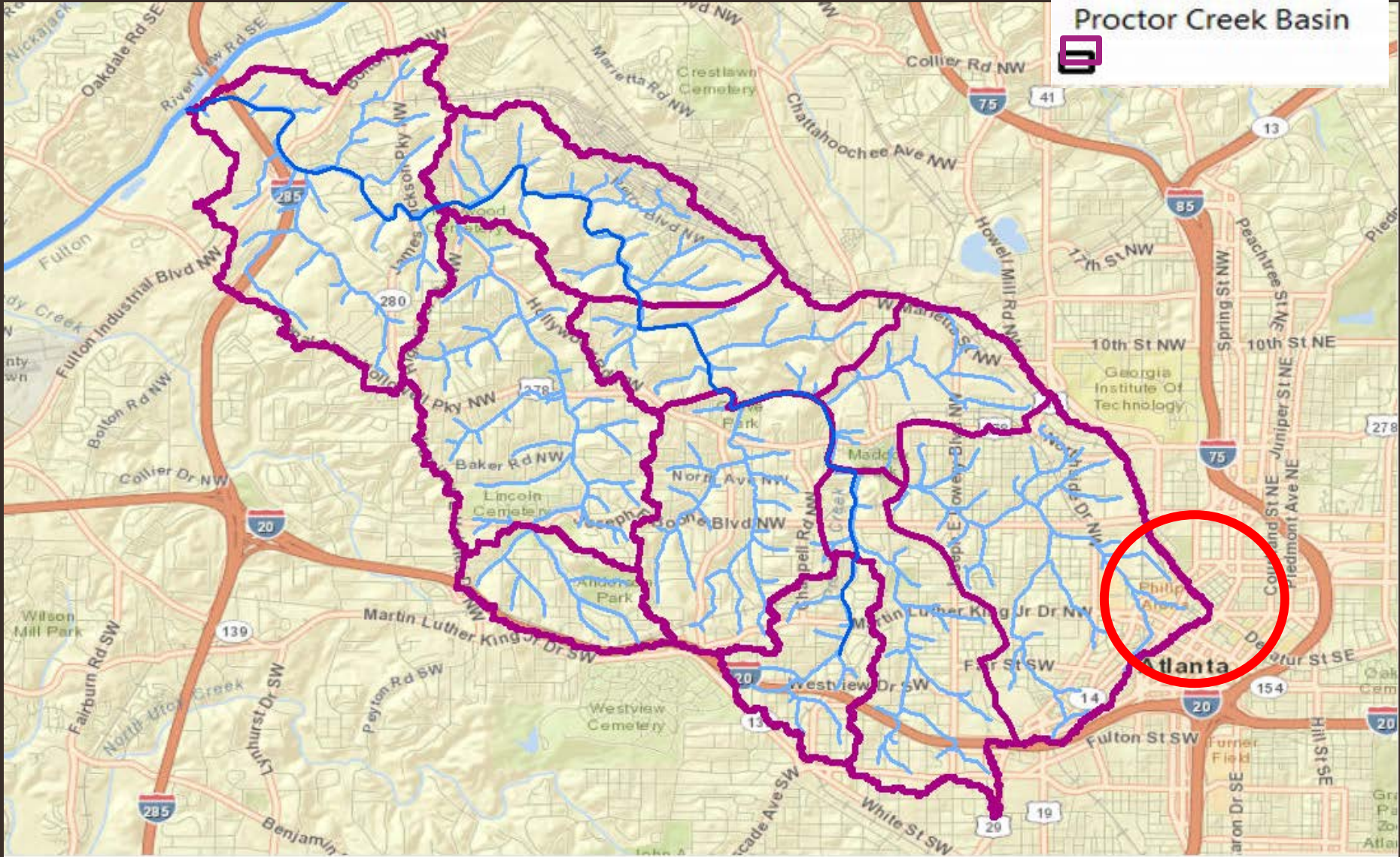


Mrs. Juanita Wallace

“ As a child I enjoyed the environment of the neighborhood, about a block from my house. I used to walk down to the creek because I enjoyed the scenery. It taught me how to experience nature for myself, and I learned about different birds just from their colors, shape and sizes. I watched the different insects that flew around the environment of the creek. As I listened to the water, crickets and frogs sang in my ears. Most of all, I loved catching craw-fish and fish as they swam through the stream of the creek.”

Watershed Location

- Proctor Creek
- Chattahoochee River
- Proctor Creek Basin

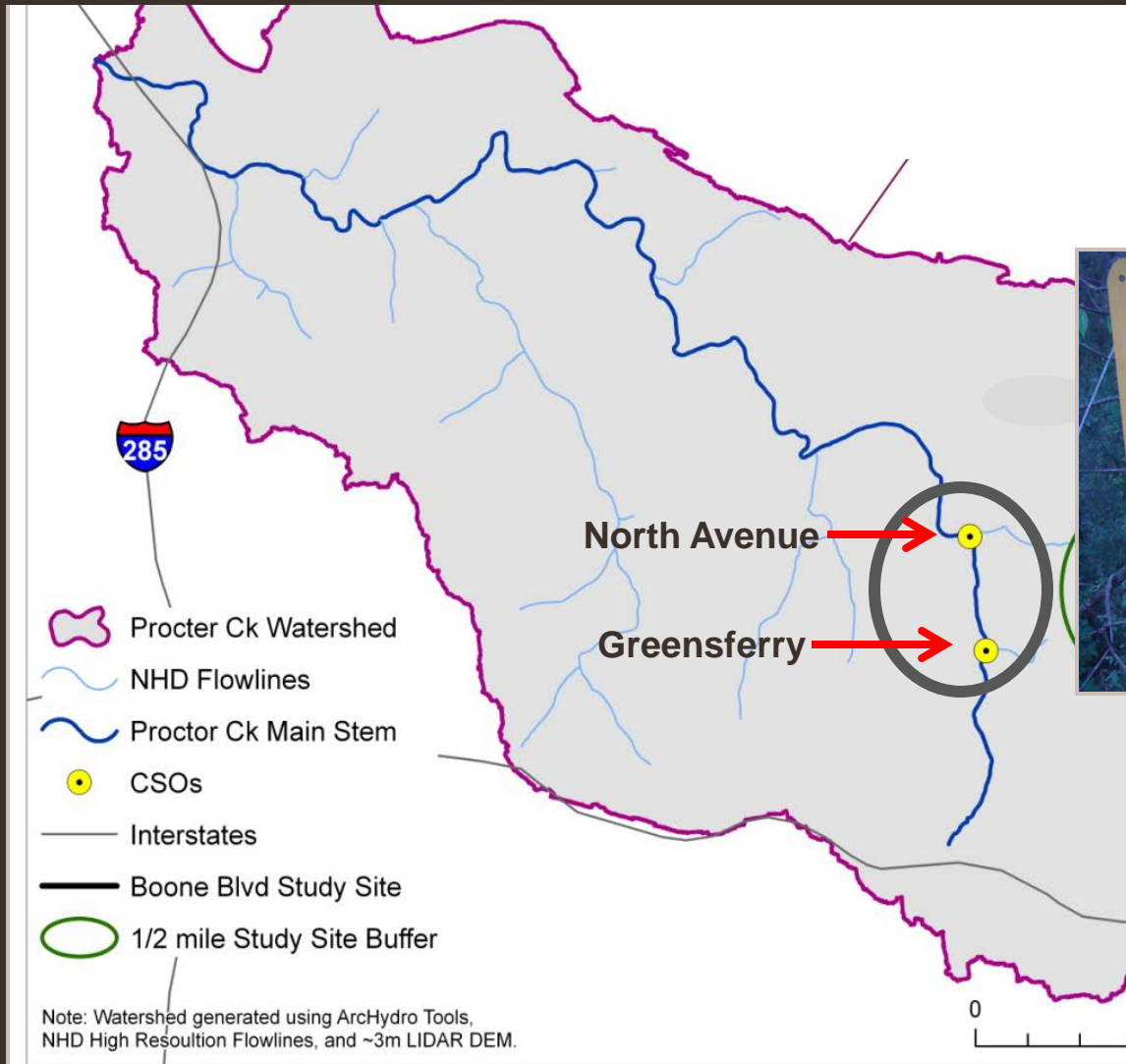


Proctor Creek and its Communities Have Numerous Challenges



Watershed Issues

CSOs, SSOs, Fecal Coliform

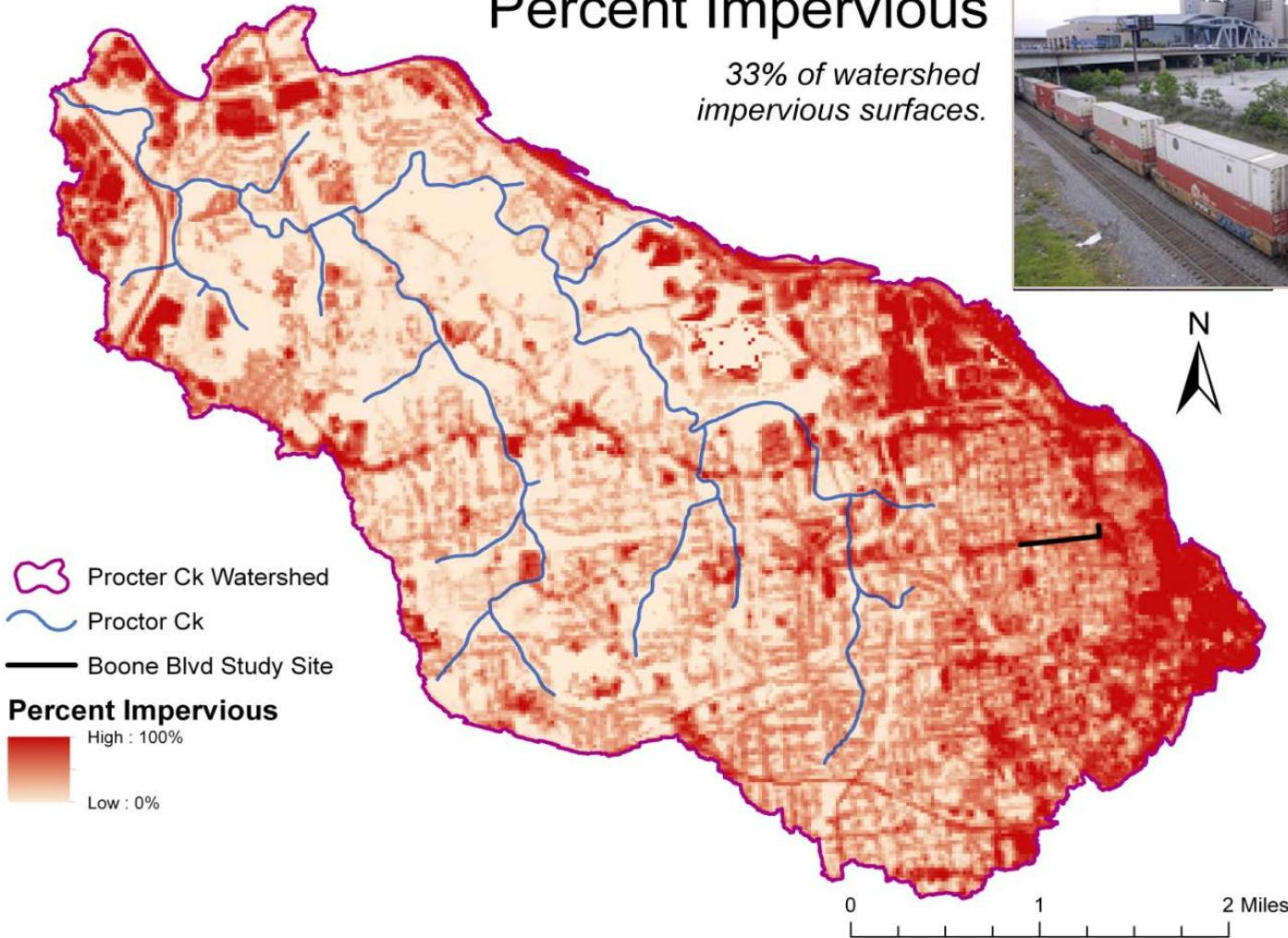




Watershed Issues

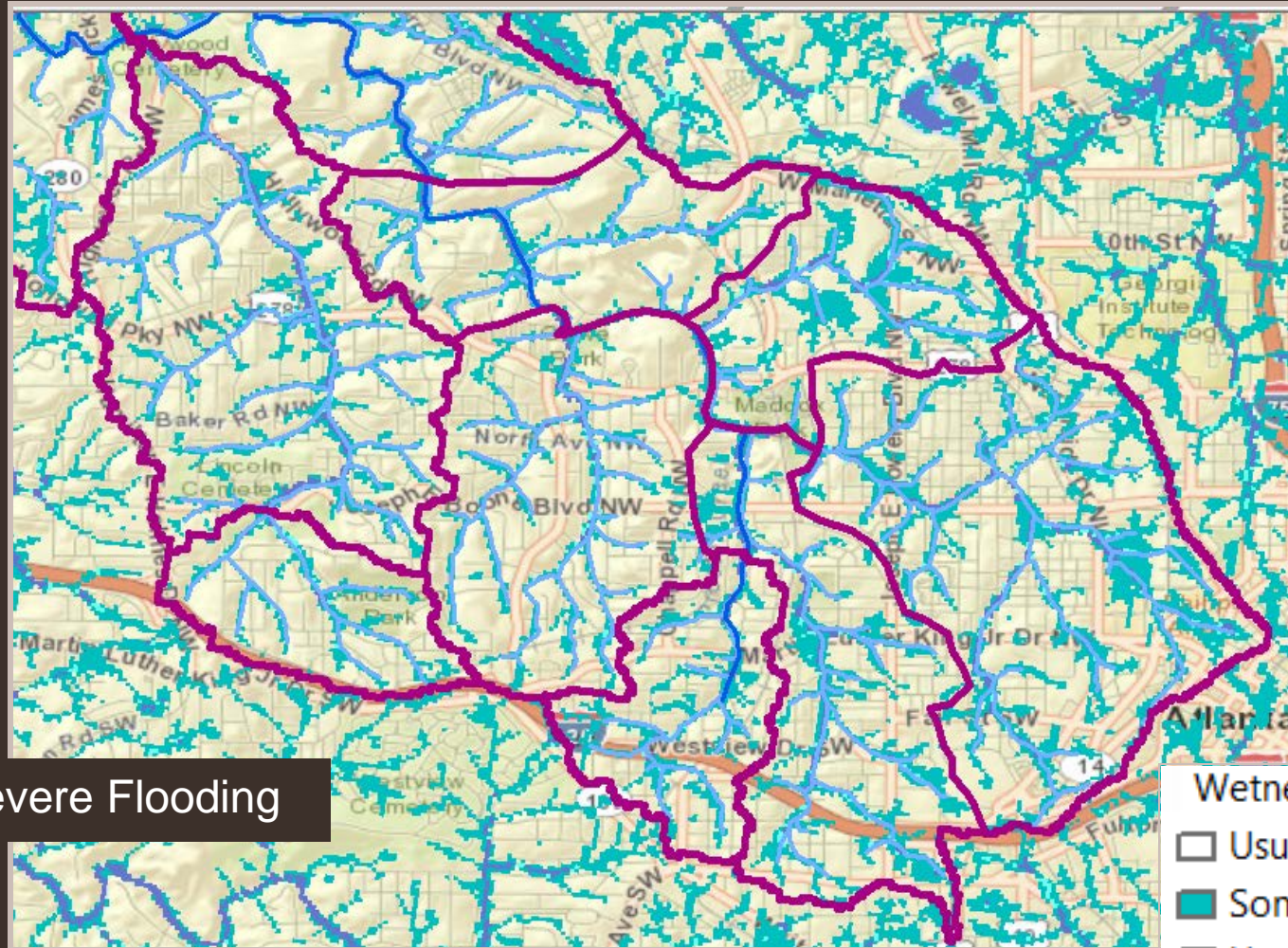
Percent Impervious

*33% of watershed
impervious surfaces.*



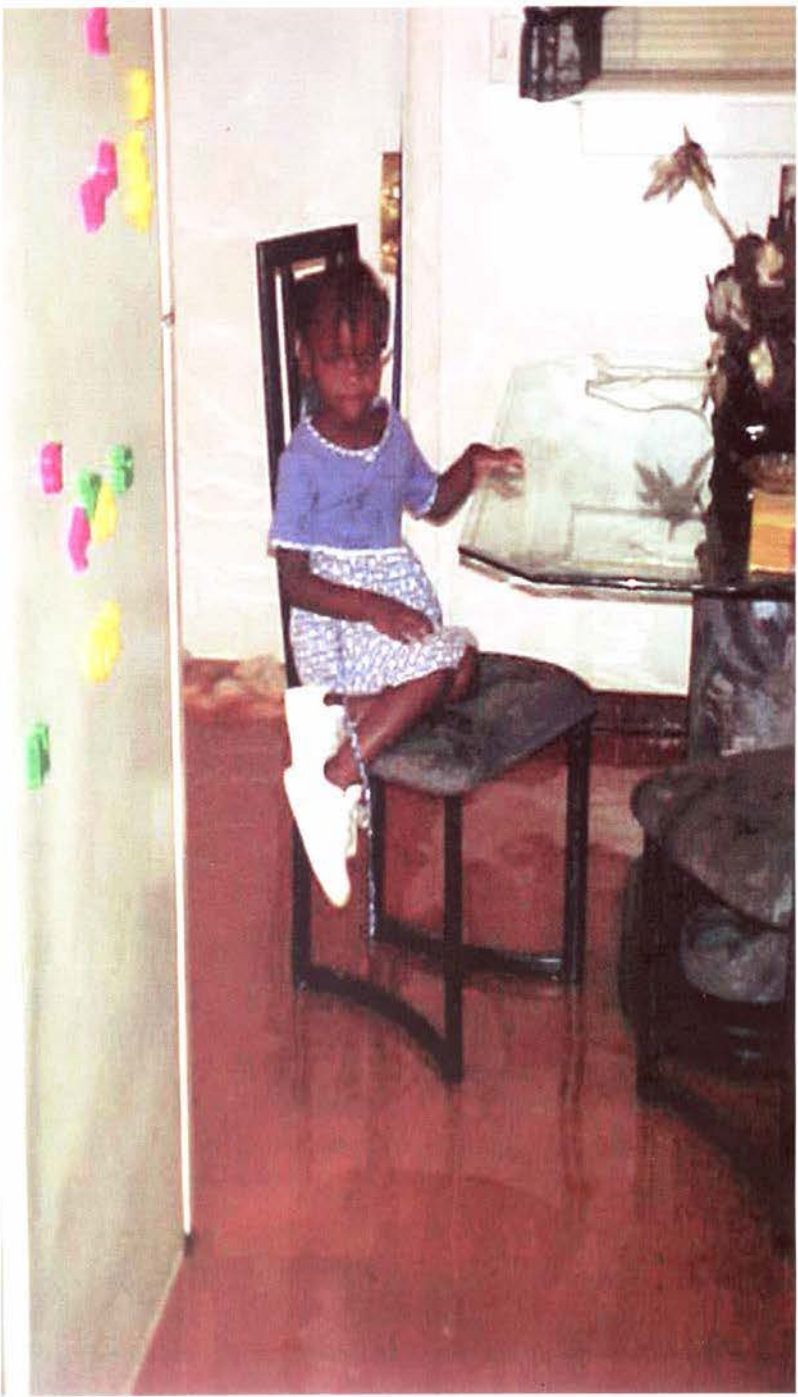
- Watershed 33% impervious
- Considerable development in the headwaters
- Headwaters area 1.5 - 2.5 times more impervious

Watershed Issues



Severe Flooding

- Wetness Index
- Usually Not Wet
 - Sometimes Wet
 - Usually Wet
 - Always Wet



The Stadium Effect



The Proctor Creek “Comeback”

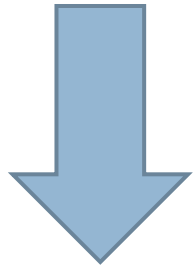


“Communities in and around the Proctor Creek Watershed have long suffered from pollution caused by Atlanta’s aging sewer infrastructure, disinvestment in the urban core, illegal dumping and other environmental and public health hazards.

The strength of the Partnership will be realized through collaboration with residents who have assets, local knowledge, and a history of action focused on restoring the watershed.”

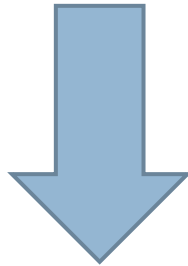
An Abbreviated Chronology of Events

Pre-1995



COMMUNITY

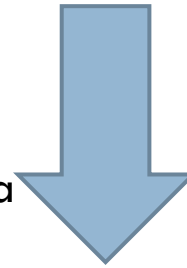
1998



COMMUNITY



2013



Surfrider Foundation,
Community-Building
Coalition of NW Atlanta

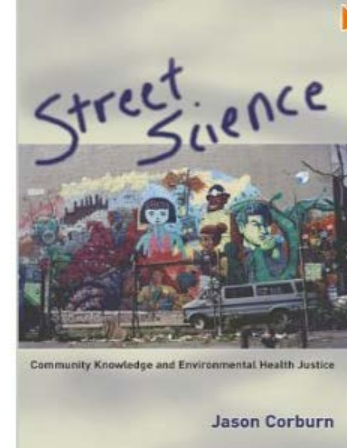


THE TRUST for PUBLIC LAND
LAND FOR PEOPLE



The Conservation Fund,
Georgia Tech,
Groundwork USA,
Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., The
Path Foundation, The
Center for Watershed
Protection, American
Rivers, Emory University,
Environment GA

Citizens as “Scientists”



- In recent years, citizen science in air and water quality monitoring and other community-based approaches have been used to address a wide range of health and environmental justice challenges in community settings



Neighborhood Water Watch





There is Value in Local Knowledge

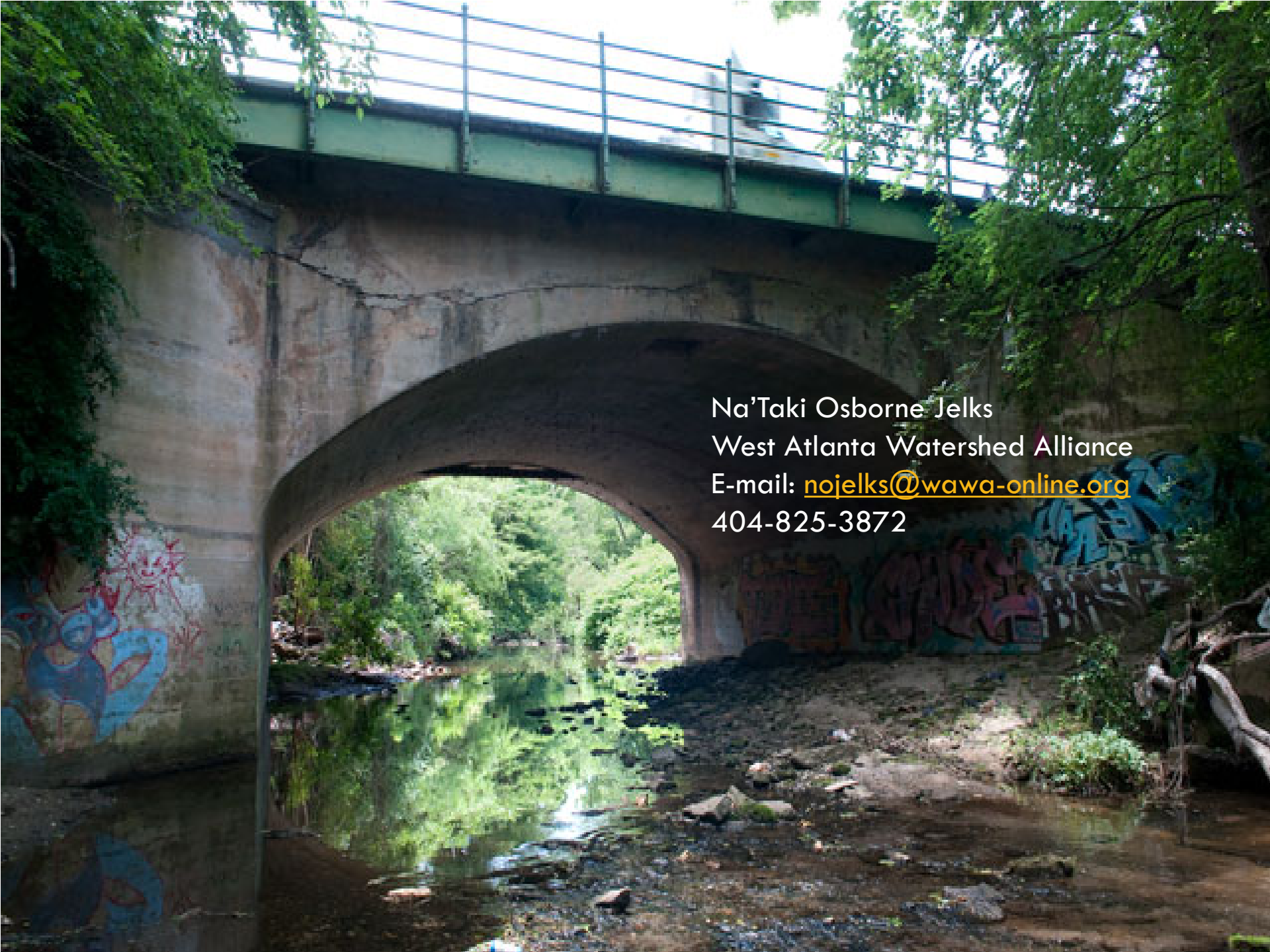
- “...local knowledge, inquiry, and organizing can extend the reach and refine the focus of established professional expertise.” —John Forester, Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University
- "Like a well-informed and motivated patient, a community that actively investigates local health conditions can contribute greatly to better outcomes. But this is a messy and imprecise process, one that is as much about democracy as it is about wellness." In recognizing, "...the value of local knowledge [we] sharpen our understanding of how community residents and health professionals can collaborate effectively to seek a second opinion." —Don Chen, Executive Director, *Smart Growth America*
- “You’d be surprised at the knowledge walking that street.”
-----Juanita Wallace, Resident and Public Safety Chair - English Avenue Neighborhood Association (Atlanta, GA/Proctor Creek Watershed)

Where we CAN get with True Collaboration & Authentic Engagement



“I learned to swim in that creek. I played in that creek, fished in that creek. I just want it like it was...”

---Latia Perry (English Ave.
Neighborhood/Proctor Creek Watershed
Resident



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