

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

07/23/2024

Contact: Meaghan Walsh Gerard

Communications and Administrative Director

meaghan@ogeecheeriverkeeper.org



ORK FILES REPORT, GETS SUN HILL CREEK CLEANED UP

B-H Transfer in Sandersville allowed plastic pellets, soda ash into creek

Ogeechee Riverkeeper (ORK) conducted an investigation and entered a complaint with Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) regarding plastic pellets found in the Sun Hill Creek, a tributary of the Ogeechee River, located in Sandersville, Washington County, Georgia. ORK found the source to be B-H Transfer on Waco Mill Road and filed the complaint on February 16. As of July 11, 2024, the cleanup has been completed, mitigation efforts are installed, and additional buffer planting is scheduled for autumn.

According to *As You Sow*, “plastic pellets are produced by petrochemical chemical companies and transported to plastic manufacturing facilities where they are melted down and shaped into a final product. ... An estimated ten trillion plastic pellets are swept into waterways annually, adding to harmful levels of plastic pollution in the environment.”¹

Alongside ORK, GA EPD confirmed the presence and source of the plastic pellets. They also found evidence of soda ash washing into storm drains and into the creek. GA EPD subsequently required the B-H Transfer operation located on Sandersville Railroad Company yard to submit safety data sheets and provide a corrective action plan (CAP).

At the March 25, 2024 enforcement conference, B-H Transfer requested and was granted an extension to submit their CAP until May. It was submitted to GA EPD on May 8, 2024, and it noted their efforts to remove plastic pellets from the creek and from neighboring parcels. In May 2024, GA EPD noted B-H Transfer installed screens at storm drains and verified a buffer restoration plan was in place.

According to the July 11, 2024 note, GA EPD stated: “300 gallons of plastic pellets had been recovered and 98% removed from downstream property and waterway. Twenty-one tons of spilled soda was also clean-up [sic] in the railcar loading area and sent to Wolf Creek Landfill. ... An industrial stormwater permit application has been submitted for the site and should be issued soon. The stream buffer disturbance is being handled by the City of Sandersville Local Issuing Authority (LIA) for Erosion & Sedimentation Control for further compliance.”

ORK will continue to monitor the sites downstream to ensure compliance.

A full report, images, and additional documents are available here:

<https://cts.gaepd.org/Public/ComplaintDetails/107816>

About Ogeechee Riverkeeper: *Ogeechee Riverkeeper 501(c)(3) works to protect, preserve, and improve the water quality of the Ogeechee River basin, which includes all of the streams flowing out to Ossabaw Sound and St. Catherine’s Sound. The Canoochee River is about 108 miles long and the Ogeechee River itself is approximately 245 miles long. The Ogeechee River system drains more than 5,500 square miles across 21 counties in Georgia. More at ogeecheeriverkeeper.org.*

¹ <https://www.asyousow.org/our-work/circular-economy/plastic-pellets>