

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Walker County ordered by EPD to remove Rock Creek Crossing Structure

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From: Rock Creek Landowners Protection Alliance (RCLPA)

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Walker County officials have been ordered by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to remove a damaging structure and crossing that Walker County installed in Rock Creek. In March of 2012, Walker County constructed a creek crossing by essentially filling in the open channel of Rock Creek and in doing so released a huge amount of sediment into the creek damaging the fish habitat.

Rock Creek, on Lookout Mountain, is in an environmentally sensitive watershed that feeds into Lula Lake Falls and runs through property belonging to Lula Lake Land Trust as well as many private owners.

The EPD fined Walker County \$65,000.00 for the lack of erosion and sediment controls, silt barriers and construction activities within a stream buffer zone, among other things, and required Walker County to perform certain work intended to stabilize the site, but the original order did not require removal of the structure.

In September of 2013, the EPD documented the following continuing problems:

The work conducted by the Walker County at the Site has resulted in an unstable Site from which sediment *continues* to be deposited into Rock Creek,

EPD staff have observed and documented with photographs that the Site is not stable and the crossing is failing,

EPD has documented that portions of the bank where Respondent conducted land disturbing activity and inserted rip rap and fill have collapsed and sloughed away.

On September 30, 2013, in response to a third party appeal of the original order, the EPD ordered Walker County to remove the structure and to restore the creek to its natural state. At the urging of the appealing party, the EPD agreed to allow Walker County to spend the \$65,000.00 on the repair and restoration work.

While Walker County agreed to the EPD's order, in public statements it inexplicably continues to say that it did nothing wrong, that it put nothing in the creek. The case is well documented with photos and the appeal and the new order are available to the public.