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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2017

Lithonia Area Sewer Spill Containment Underway *CEO Thurmond orders inspection of river crossings countywide*

DECATUR, Ga. — DeKalb County and emergency contractor crews working overnight to contain a major sewer spill discovered more extensive damage to the creek crossing than initially observed yesterday morning.

High bacteria counts in the Snapfinger Creek area alerted inspectors to the spill, which was caused by a 16-inch-diameter tree growing out of the concrete junction box where two pipes converge. The location of the pipe, along with the extent of the deterioration, is making containment difficult.



The large tree shown above was growing out of a concrete sewer box, causing the Aug. 23 spill into Snapfinger Creek.

(more)

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More than 40 crew workers along with a dozen pieces of heavy machinery are working to contain the spill by installing a temporary pipe to bypass the compromised river crossing. Permanent repairs will begin once the spill is contained.

“The two recent major spills clearly indicate that DeKalb County’s inspection of its sewer system has been deficient,” DeKalb CEO Michael Thurmond said. “The regular inspection and maintenance of our sewer infrastructure is now a top priority.”

CEO Thurmond has directed Department of Watershed Management (DWM) staff to conduct emergency inspections of all creek crossings in the county and to inspect all pipes along Snapfinger Creek. DWM also has been instructed to implement a plan of regular inspections of sewer lines.

DWM crews and contractors are working to assess the size of the spill which was discovered on Aug. 23 near Eagle’s Beek Circle, Lithonia, on a 54-inch creek crossing just north of the Snapfinger Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The county continues to warn residents in this area to avoid the spill site and keep their pets from the waterway until further notice. The spill does not affect drinking water.

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