

A group of people is gathered along a creek in a lush, green park setting. The scene is filled with dense foliage and trees, creating a natural oasis. The people are dressed in casual attire, suggesting a community event or a hike. The creek flows through the center of the scene, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

# Atlanta's Intrenchment Creek

**The hidden headwaters of Atlanta's Intrenchment Creek watershed flow quietly and mostly unknown underneath tangled highways, vast parking lots, the State Capitol, Panther Stadium, neighborhoods and parks – eventually defining a natural oasis, a place apart, in the heart of the city.**

## Where is Intrenchment Creek?

The headwaters of Intrenchment Creek are hidden beneath an urban landscape defined by asphalt, from the tangled intersection of I-75/85 and I-20 to vast parking lots surrounding the former Olympic Stadium/Turner Field. The creek flows underground in pipes and first daylights near Boulevard Crossing Park and Chosewood Park.

Intrenchment Creek and its tributaries meander through a 9.3 square mile watershed, through Southeast Atlanta neighborhoods to DeKalb County, where it eventually flows into the South River east of Moreland Ave near I-285.



## Headwaters Challenges

Urban creeks are often neglected and forgotten. Intrenchment Creek is hidden behind fence lines, under pavement and roadways. The dominance of pavement, parking lots, roads and other hard surfaces, combined with aging and undersized stormwater and sewer pipes underground, have resulted in persistent flooding and combined sewer spills in and around the historic neighborhoods of Peoplestown, Summerhill, Mechanicsville, and Pittsburgh.

Photo: Johnathon Kelso

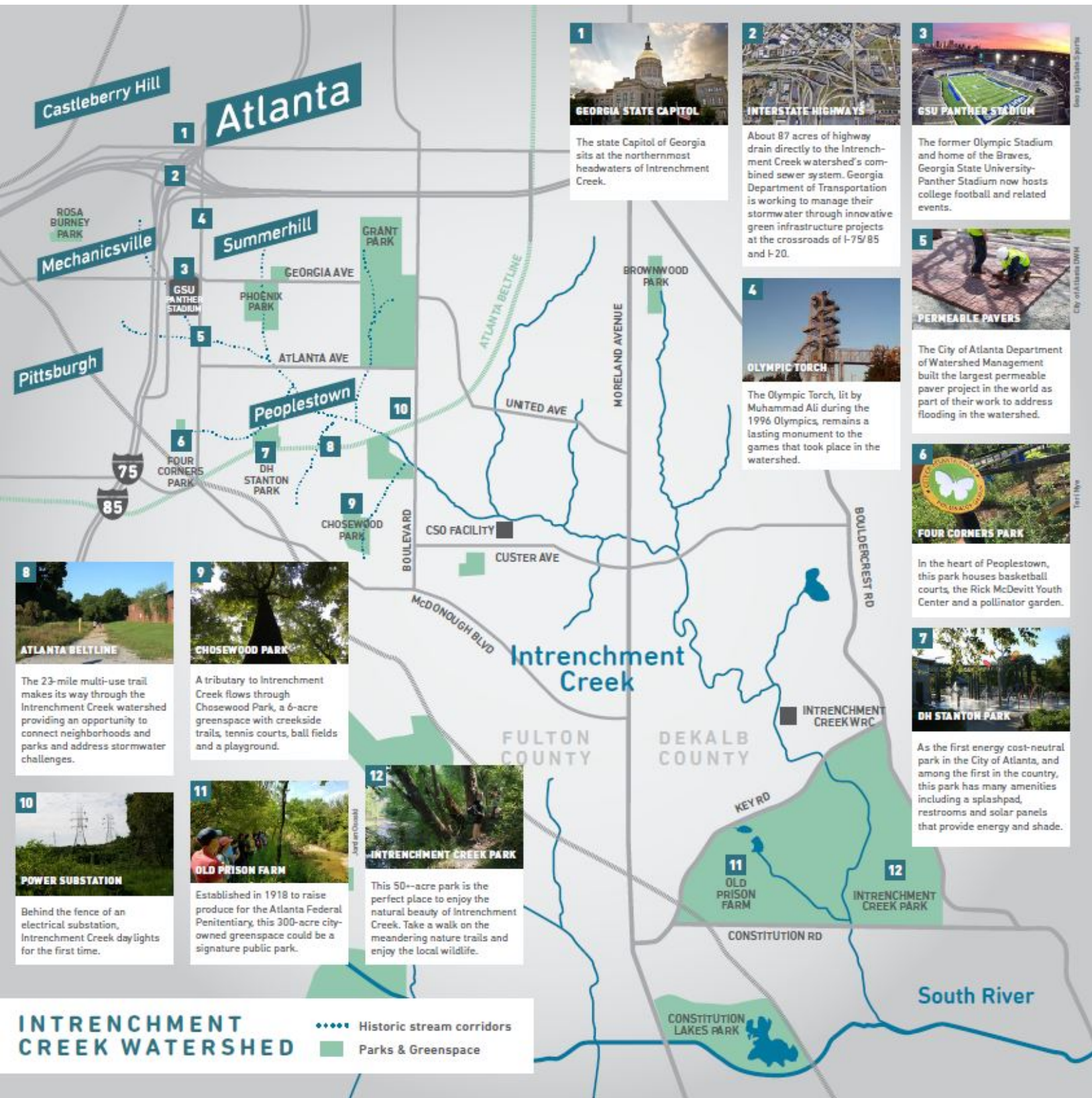
## WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the area of land from which all rainfall drains into a body of water. A watershed is like a funnel—collecting all the water within the drainage area and channeling it into a waterway.



## ATLANTA'S WATERSHEDS

The City of Atlanta's geography is unique in that it is one of the few large cities to be located on a subcontinental divide. That means that rain that falls in the northern and western areas of the city drains into the Chattahoochee River and, eventually, the Gulf of Mexico; while rain that falls in the southern and eastern parts of the city drains into Intrenchment Creek, which joins the South River, the Altamaha River, and eventually, the Atlantic Ocean.



**1**

**GEORGIA STATE CAPITOL**

The state Capitol of Georgia sits at the northernmost headwaters of Intranchment Creek.

**2**

**INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS**

About 87 acres of highway drain directly to the Intranchment Creek watershed's combined sewer system. Georgia Department of Transportation is working to manage their stormwater through innovative green infrastructure projects at the crossroads of I-75/85 and I-20.

**3**

**GSU PANTHER STADIUM**

The former Olympic Stadium and home of the Braves, Georgia State University-Panther Stadium now hosts college football and related events.

**5**

**PERMEABLE PAVERS**

The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management built the largest permeable paver project in the world as part of their work to address flooding in the watershed.

**4**

**OLYMPIC TORCH**

The Olympic Torch, lit by Muhammad Ali during the 1996 Olympics, remains a lasting monument to the games that took place in the watershed.

**6**

**FOUR CORNERS PARK**

In the heart of Peoplestown, this park houses basketball courts, the Rick McDevitt Youth Center and a pollinator garden.

**8**

**ATLANTA BELTLINE**

The 23-mile multi-use trail makes its way through the Intranchment Creek watershed providing an opportunity to connect neighborhoods and parks and address stormwater challenges.

**9**

**CHOSEWOOD PARK**

A tributary to Intranchment Creek flows through Chosewood Park, a 6-acre greenspace with creekside trails, tennis courts, ball fields and a playground.

**10**

**POWER SUBSTATION**

Behind the fence of an electrical substation, Intranchment Creek daylight for the first time.

**11**

**OLD PRISON FARM**

Established in 1918 to raise produce for the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, this 300-acre city-owned greenspace could be a signature public park.

**12**

**INTRANCHMENT CREEK PARK**

This 50+-acre park is the perfect place to enjoy the natural beauty of Intranchment Creek. Take a walk on the meandering nature trails and enjoy the local wildlife.

**7**

**DH STANTON PARK**

As the first energy cost-neutral park in the City of Atlanta, and among the first in the country, this park has many amenities including a splashpad, restrooms and solar panels that provide energy and shade.

**INTRANCHMENT CREEK WATERSHED**

..... Historic stream corridors

■ Parks & Greenspace

1: City of Atlanta; 2: City of Atlanta; 3: City of Atlanta; 4: City of Atlanta; 5: City of Atlanta; 6: City of Atlanta; 7: City of Atlanta; 8: City of Atlanta; 9: City of Atlanta; 10: City of Atlanta; 11: City of Atlanta; 12: City of Atlanta



City of Atlanta DWM



Chris Lemons

## HISTORY OF INTRENCHMENT CREEK

- 1821 Decades before the Civil War, Intrenchment Creek was named on an early survey of the area, perhaps referring to trenches dug by indigenous peoples.
- 1864 The creek valley saw major troop movements during the Battle of Atlanta.
- 1911 Intrenchment Creek Viaduct constructed in Southeast Atlanta.
- 1936 WPA-funded infrastructure projects included the Intrenchment Creek Disposal Plant.
- 1956 Summerhill area targeted for urban renewal or "slum clearance."
- 1964 Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium constructed and I-75/85 and I-20 built.
- 1980s Persistent flooding in Summerhill and Peopletown.
- 1996 Centennial Olympic Stadium constructed, then converted to Turner Field.
- 1999 South River Watershed Alliance founded in response to EPA Clean Water Act violations.
- 2012 Flooding and combined sewer spills in stadium neighborhoods prompted the city to launch the SE Atlanta Green Infrastructure Initiative.
- 2015 Turner Field sold to Georgia State University; surrounding parcels sold to GSU and a private developer.
- 2016 Livable Centers Initiative study proposed redevelopment concepts for the 70 acres of Turner Field parking lots.  
ECO-Action hosted the first Green Infrastructure Advocate Training for community leaders.
- 2017 Intrenchment Creek One Water Management Task Force created to address persistent flooding and secure related community benefits.

## Lessons from the past

The neighborhoods surrounding GSU Panther Stadium have endured decades of infrastructure-driven injustices. Interstate highways and stadiums have transformed once-thriving communities into a vast sea of parking lots and roads—displacing residents, small businesses, and jobs and causing significant flooding and combined sewer spills into residential neighborhoods. An unprecedented opportunity exists now to repair and restore the health of the Intrenchment Creek watershed and its communities with the redevelopment of the 70 acres of stadium parking lots.



## Nature in the City

Where you can find the creek, you will also find wildlife that call Intrenchment Creek home. Turtles sun themselves on logs, birds of all kinds—including the occasional heron—use the creek corridor as a flyway, beavers build lodges, fish swim, while deer and foxes make their way through the forests along the creek.

Photo: Jordan Ososki

## You can help!

**EXPLORE** Intrenchment Creek and its tributaries, taking photos, tracking wildlife or taking a walk along the creek!

**SHARE** what you find with local media, social media, and citizen science apps like Smell MyCity and iNaturalist.

**CONNECT** with ECO-Action or the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network for training and support on flooding issues and green solutions.

**ORGANIZE** activities that help support the revitalization of Intrenchment Creek—a community clean up, watershed walk, or water quality monitoring event.

**ADVOCATE** for development that goes beyond compliance with environmental regulations, manages all water to address flooding and combined sewer spills, and incorporates green infrastructure with benefits for all.

**ENGAGE** with your neighbors, city council members, and NPU's to raise awareness about the creek and its potential to be a community asset.

### LEARN MORE:

[AmericanRivers.org](http://AmericanRivers.org)

[facebook.com/IntrenchmentCreek](https://facebook.com/IntrenchmentCreek)

[instagram.com/Intrenchmentcreek](https://instagram.com/Intrenchmentcreek)

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