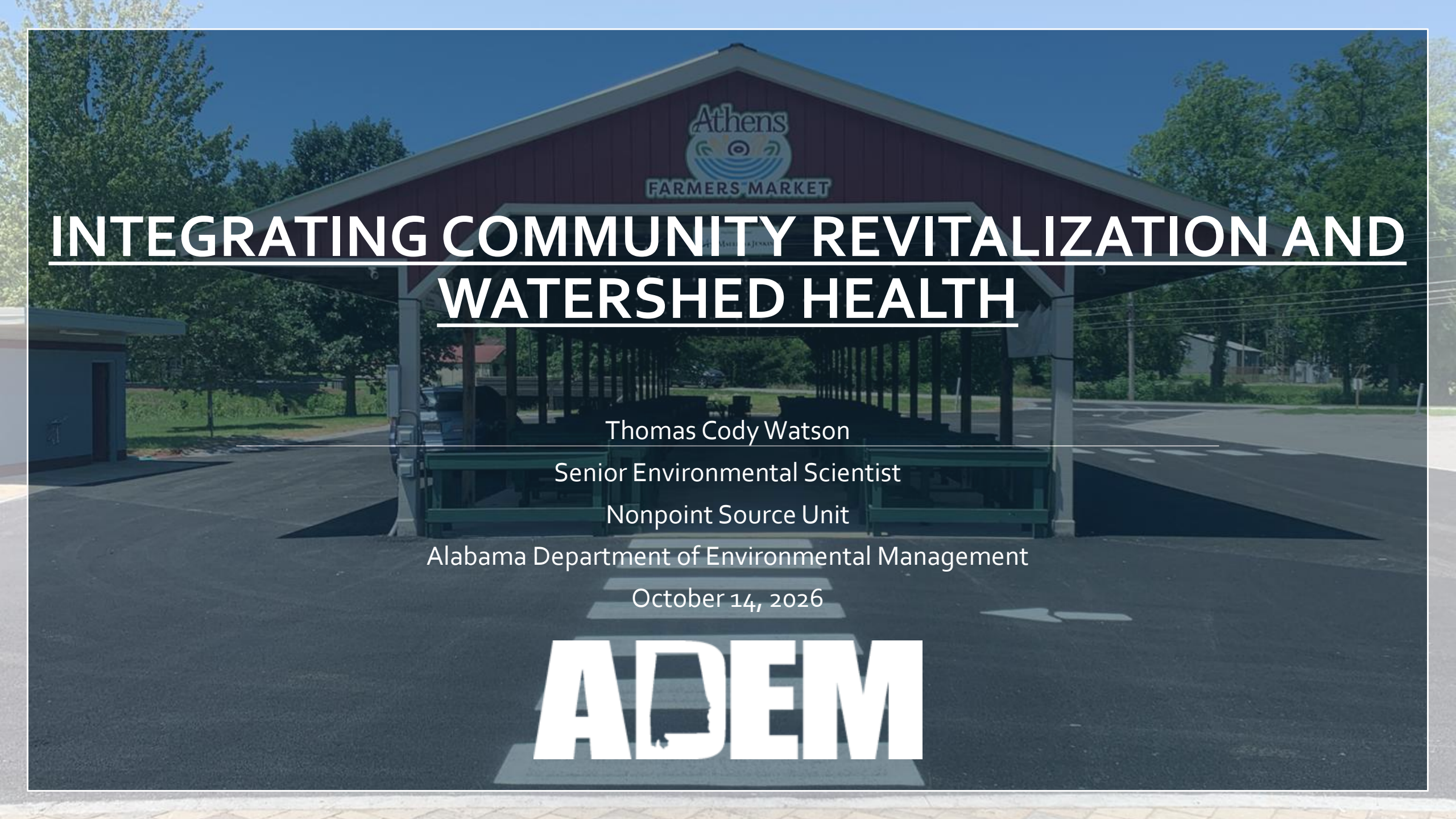


INTEGRATING COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AND WATERSHED HEALTH

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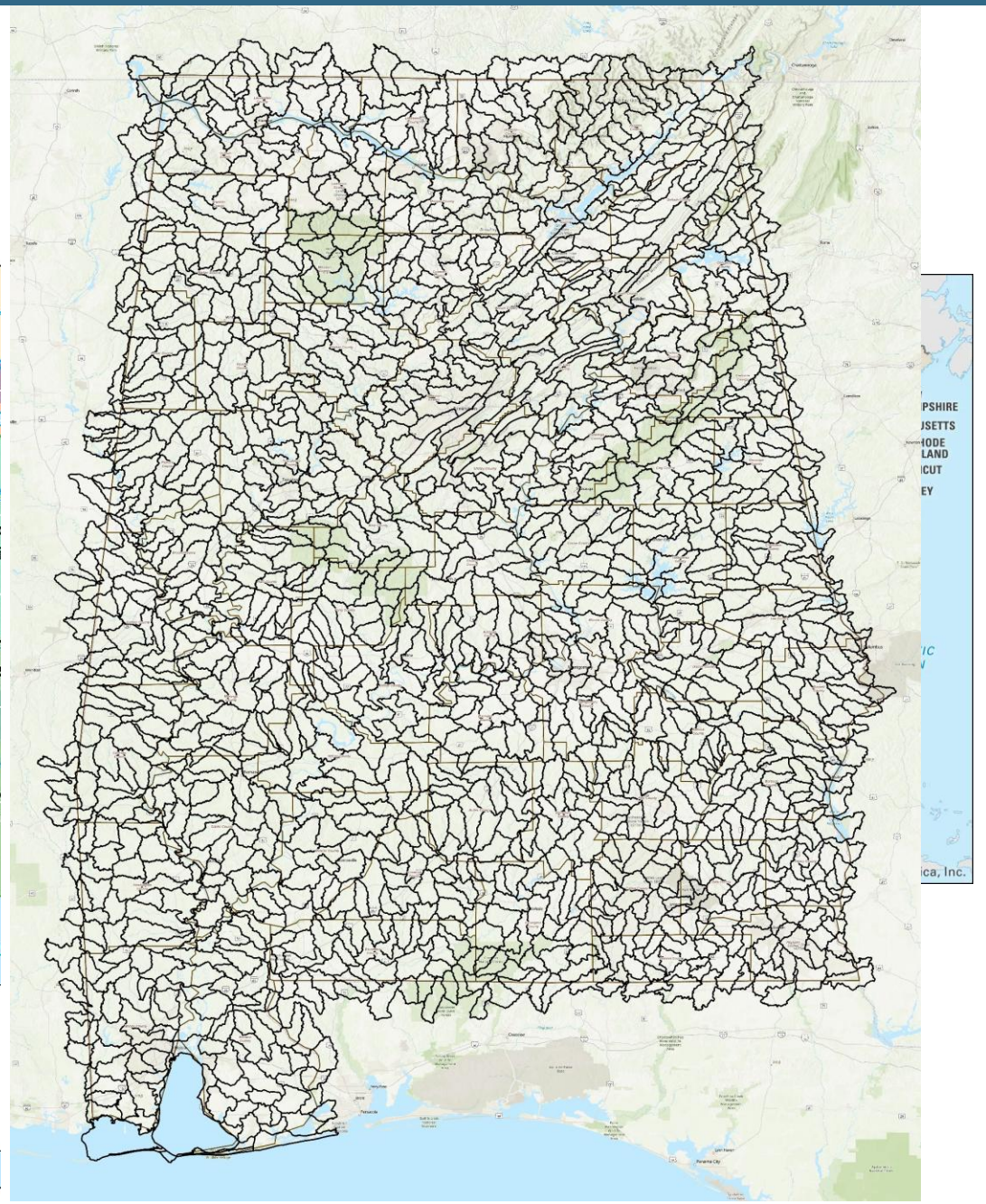
October 14, 2026

ADEM

What is a Community?







Athens Farmers Market: History of a Community

- 1972: Athens Farmers Market was Founded.
  - Inaugural market consisted of three producers
- 1986: Construction of a pavilion and vendor booths serve as the markets dedicated home.
- Mid 1990s: Market grew to accommodate up to 50 vendors.
- 1995: Market expanded to include an all-winter market.

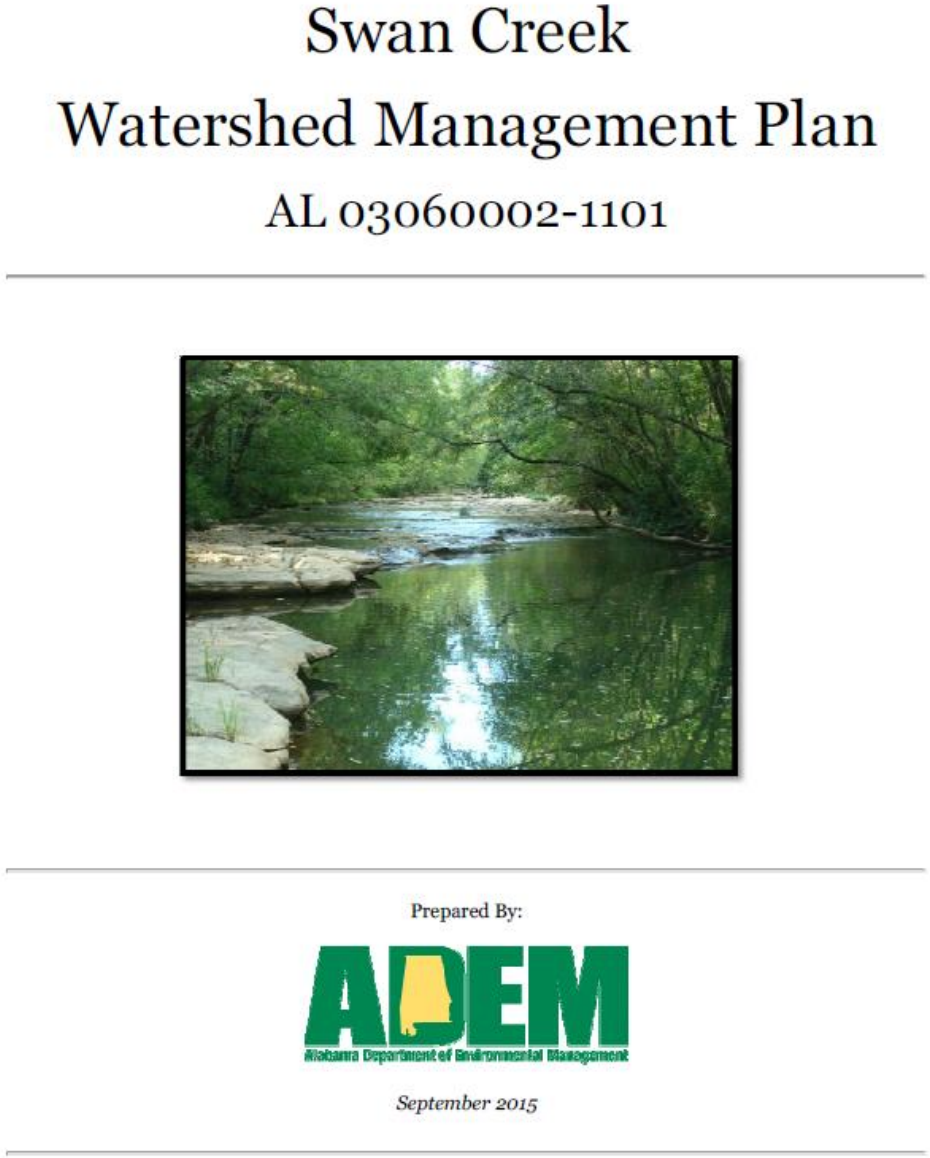


Nonpoint Source Management Program

- Oversee and administer EPA's Clean Water Act Section 319 grant funding for Alabama.
  - Funding can be used to address state and local nonpoint sources of pollution through technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, and demonstration projects.
- Funding can be used in Hydrologic Unit Code 12 (HUC12) areas that have a listed impairment on Alabama's 303(d) list or have a TMDL.
  - State maintained inventory of assessed waterways that have impairments.
  - EPA also maintains an interactive map with each state's listed impairments
    - https://mywaterway.epa.gov/

Athens Farmers Market in the Swan Creek Watershed

- Farmers Market
  - Located in urban portion of the watershed
    - Approximately 23% of watershed is urban
  - Adjacent to Town Creek, tributary of Swan Creek
- 1996: ADEM listed Swan Creek (AL 03060002-1101) on the CWA 303(d) list for siltation, organic enrichment, and dissolved oxygen.
  - 2002: TMDL approved for organic enrichment and dissolved oxygen
  - 2003: Siltation TMDL approved for 22 segments of the Tennessee River Basin, including Swan Creek



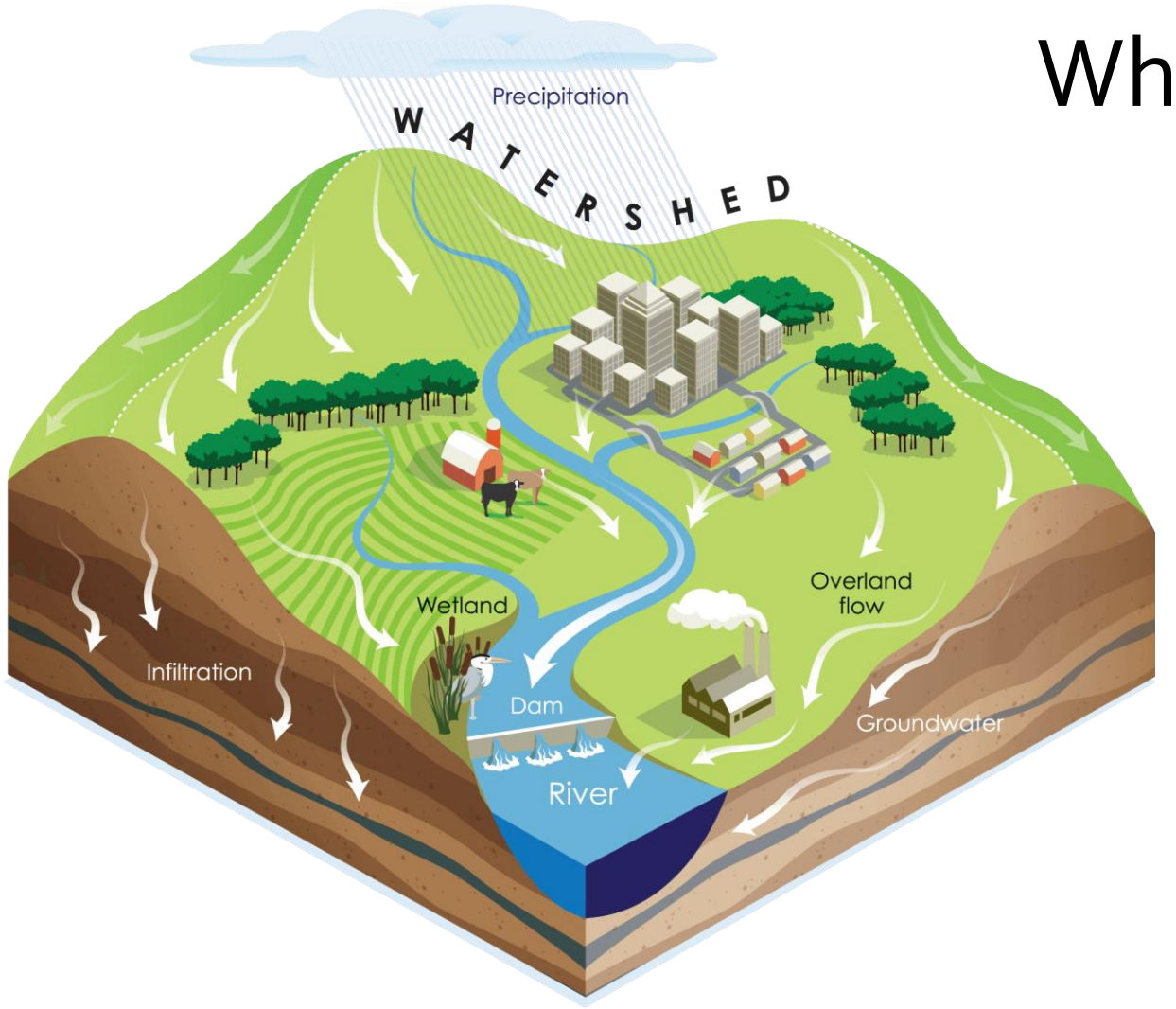
Watershed Management Plans in a Community

Watershed Management Plans (WMP)

- A strategic, community-based roadmap used to restore polluted water bodies and protect healthy ones within a specific drainage basin/watershed

Purpose

- Restore and protect water bodies
- Guide stakeholders
- Identify and unlock funding



What does a WMP discuss?

- Physical description of the watershed
- Land use description
- Water quality issues and benchmarks
- Identified sources of impairments (pollution)
- Estimates of pollutants loads and load reductions
- Load reduction strategies
- Educational recommendations
- Estimates of technical and financial assistance
- Schedule of implementation

Making Watershed Management Plans successful

- Who needs to be at the table?
  - County and municipal government
  - Private citizens
  - Private organizations
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Federal and state staff
- Why does the table need to be so big?
  - Wholistic watershed approach
  - Stakeholder input is vital to the success of the plan
  - Opens opportunities for leveraging funds
  - Identifying common problems or goals



Why are WMPs important?

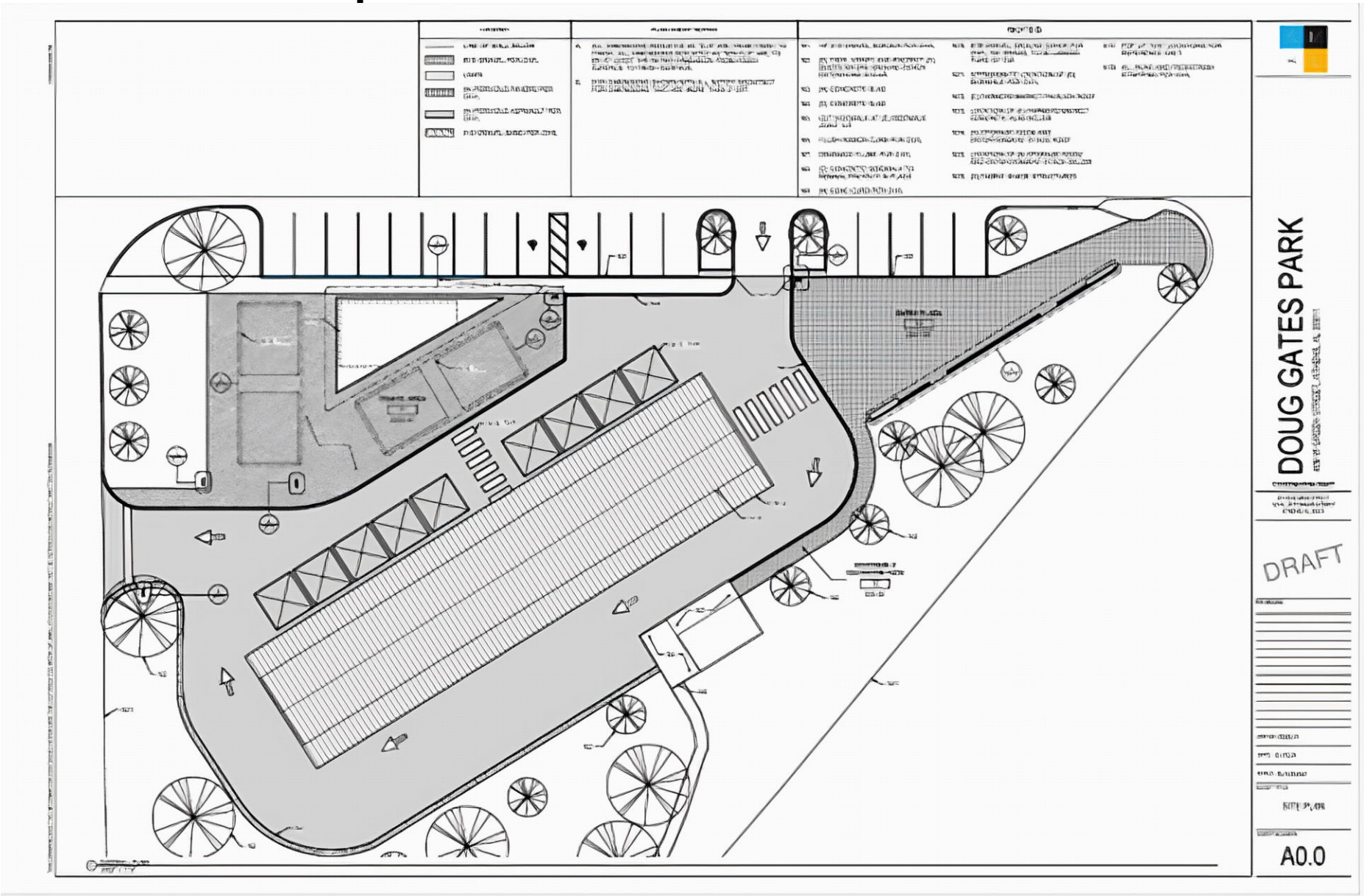
- To a community
  - Unifies existing efforts: Aligns separate city goals, volunteer projects, and local initiatives under one roadmap.
  - Connects mission driven people: Bring together neighbors, agencies, and advocacy groups already working towards the same goals.
  - Safeguards public health: Protects vital drinking water sources and can lower treatment cost.
- To the environment
  - Magnifies ecological impact: Combines isolated restoration projects into a continuous pathway for native wildlife.
  - Builds resilience: Creates robust, interconnected natural zones that naturally absorb floodwaters and resist extreme droughts.
  - Revitalizes shared habitats: Restores degraded wetlands and stream banks so native species can thrive.



Athens Farmers Market Project

- 2019 Three Phase Revitalization Plan:
  - Phase I: Removal of outdated/dilapidated structures and existing building renovations
  - Phase II: Address accessibility, enhancing stormwater storage capacity, and ADA compliance
  - Phase III: Education and entertainment pavilion installation
- Project Goals:
  - Remove legacy impervious asphalt and concrete and replace it with porous asphalt and pavers.
  - Renovate existing building to include ADA compliance walkways and increase booth facilities.
  - Create community space that can be utilized outside of the Farmers Market days.
  - Reduce nonpoint sources of pollution from entering Town Creek, a tributary of Swan Creek.

Conceptualization of Revitalization



Project Funding and Implementation

- Funding Sources:
  - Section 319: $334,577
  - Local Public Funds: $29,773
  - Private Donation and Grants: $271,024
  - In-kind Donations: $300,000
  - Total: $935,374
- BMPs and allocation for implementation
  - Porous asphalt (driving and walking surface) = $209,731
  - Porous pavers = $68,000
  - Bioswales = $25,000
- BMPs implemented and final cost
  - Porous asphalt (11,233 square feet) = $255,899
  - Porous pavers (3,786.30 square feet) = $70,762.00





Key Challenges: Design and Construction

- Historic Land use:
  - Located underground piles of unregulated and regulated solid waste.
  - Local in-kind services removed and properly disposed of the waste.
- Site location and size:
  - Site: 1.25 acres adjacent to Town Creek in Downtown Athens.
  - Public use of Site was a concern for installing certain BMPs from a health and safety standpoint, resulting in the bioswales not being implemented.
- Rising cost of implementation:
  - Both BMPs implemented resulted in a higher cost than allocated, funding had to be reallocated to ensure effective implementation.



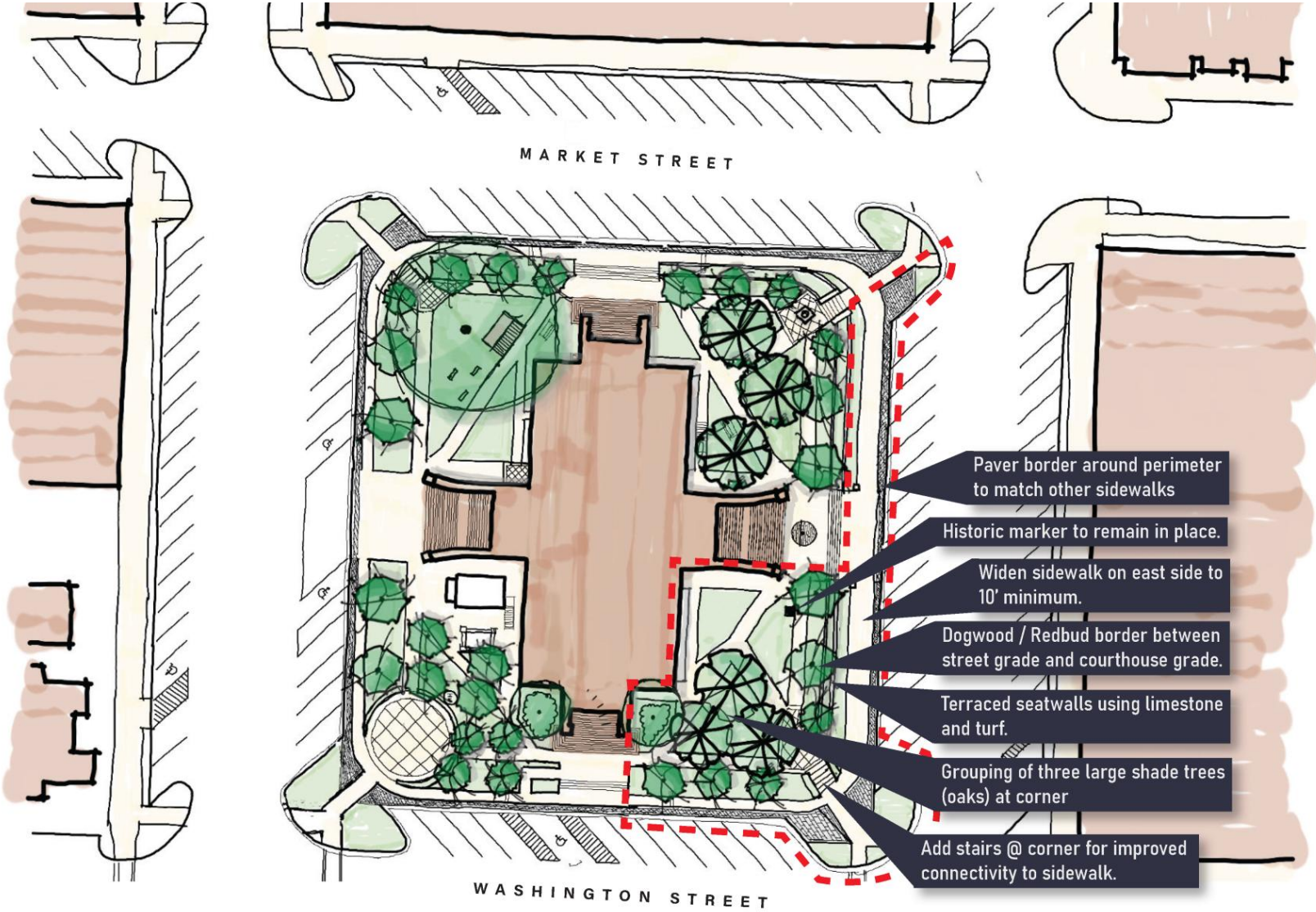


Successful Community Buy-in

- Leveraged pre-existing community revitalization plans.
  - Three phase plan was already in place, leveraging resources to address conservation concerns resulted in larger funding pool.
- Emphasized the inherent importance and value of the site to the community.
  - The community has held the Farmers Market in high regards since its construction.
- Cultivated strong relationships with important local partners.
  - Local partners provided over $266,000 of non-federal match
- Delivered comprehensive economic, recreation, and conservation benefits.
  - Highlighting locals, communities, and organizations that assist with project

Long-term Impacts of Project

- Project was completed in October 2024
- Load reductions:
  - Nitrogen: 67.77 lbs/year
  - Phosphorus: 7.58 lbs/year
  - Sediment: 2.18 tons/year
- Prior to project completion:
  - City of Athens began replacing sidewalks, roads, and revitalizing surrounding area.
  - Plans to create a "Athens 5 points" focused on walkability, dining, recreation, and new event spaces.
- City of Athens is currently and planning to implement low impact development and green infrastructure in future plans.
  - Sunrise Park
  - Replacement of crosswalks with porous pavers
  - Limestone County Courthouse repairs caused by December 2024 tornado



Limestone County Courthouse – Concept Plan

Athens, AL

Project By Athens Main Street

alta

April 2026



Thank you for your time

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