

# **Jacksonville Waterways Commission Meeting**

*June 15, 2011*



Melissa Long, Water Facilities Administrator

# Background

- ▶ Georgia Pacific's wastewater discharges to Rice Creek, a tributary that flows into the St. Johns River
- ▶ In 2002, environmental organizations challenged GP's permit renewal application because water quality standards were not being met in Rice Creek.
- ▶ The plan, including the pipeline, was reviewed during a formal hearing by an Administrative Law Judge.
- ▶ The judge's order authorized the construction and operation of a pipeline to the St. Johns River unless GP can demonstrate an ability to meet water quality standards in Rice Creek.



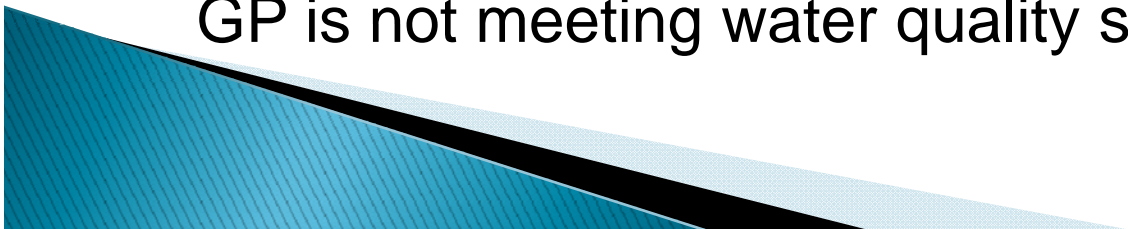
# Key Findings of the Judge's Order

- ▶ The proposed pipeline and wastewater discharge will:
  - **“lead to a net environmental benefit** in the St. Johns River and Rice Creek.”
  - **“be clearly in the public interest** because it will result in the achievement of water quality standards...” in the St. Johns River.
  - **“not adversely affect the conservation of fish and wildlife** ... Instead, the proposed discharge would provide a benefit of fish and wildlife, and their habitats.”



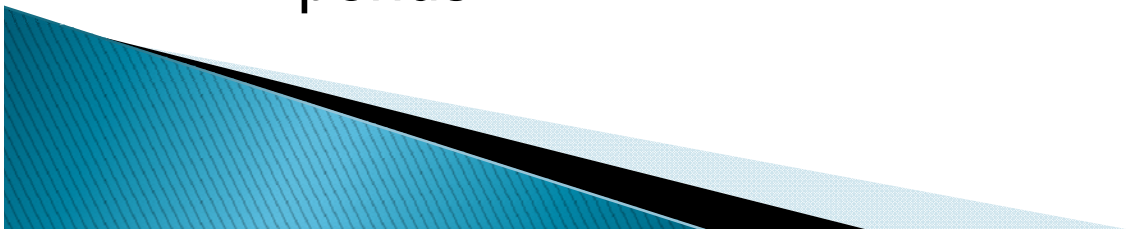
# Compliance Actions

- ▶ GP completed upgrades required by the order, which included more than \$200 million in manufacturing improvements
- ▶ Made improvements to exceed required nutrient reductions
- ▶ Reduced water consumption by 40%
- ▶ Significantly reduced pollution discharges
- ▶ According to comprehensive testing in 2008 and 2010, GP is not meeting water quality standards in Rice Creek



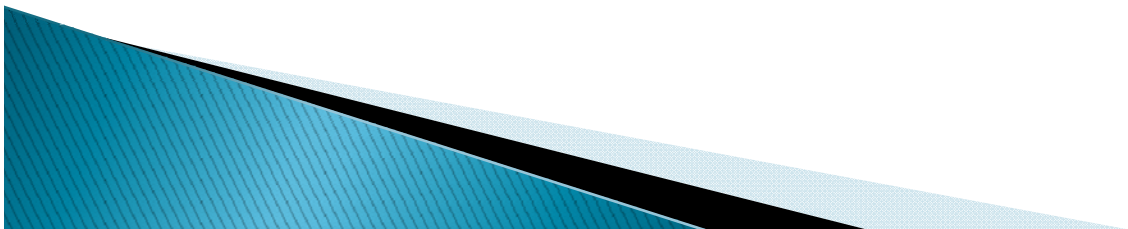
# Additional Improvements

- ▶ In 2009, DEP required GP to:
  1. Research wastewater treatment technologies that might allow them to meet water quality standards in Rice Creek
  2. Reinstigate water quality monitoring in Rice Creek
  3. Further analyze legacy solids in onsite treatment ponds



# GP's Efforts to Find Alternatives

1. Contracted with nationally-recognized engineering firm, Brown and Caldwell, which:
  - Identified additional process modifications that resulted in further water quality improvements
  - Determined there were no other viable alternatives
2. Evaluated test results and determined water quality standards are not being met in Rice Creek
3. Quantified the amount of solids in onsite treatment ponds and the levels of dioxin present in the sediment



# Key Take Away Facts

- ▶ DEP has conducted our own analysis and thoroughly reviewed numerous studies, data and research on this topic.
- ▶ With the relocation of the discharge, the overall loading to the St. Johns River will not change
- ▶ Renewal permit will have new, more stringent nutrient limits which GP is already meeting
- ▶ GP will meet water quality standards in the river, and Rice Creek can be restored.

