

Annual Red Clay Conference focuses on natural disaster planning

In the wake of last year's devastating hurricane season, organizers of the 18th Annual Red Clay Conference planned a day of panels and expert commentary to review the lessons learned and to explore how to be better prepared in the future.

The keynote speaker was nationally recognized expert on environmental law and land use Rob R.M. Verchick, the Gauthier-St. Martin Eminent Scholar Chair in Environmental Law at Loyola University in New Orleans. Since the Hurricane Katrina disaster, he has traveled the nation discussing Katrina, what went wrong, what could have been improved and the lessons that can be taken from the experience in preparation for future natural disasters.

At the March conference, Verchick addressed these issues and their implications on both a national scale and as they relate to Georgia.

Panel topics covered included: planning and preparation for emergency response, land use policy to prevent and mitigate against natural disasters, insurance implications, and health and safety issues.

Authorities from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Bar Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Southern Environmental Law Center and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers served as panelists.

Sponsored by the Environmental Law Association, the Red Clay Conference was established to increase public awareness of environmental issues of regional, national and international significance through a series of educational presentations and open forum discussions.