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Land Use Clinic brochure

University of Georgia School of Law Land Use Clinic

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Land Use Clinic



university of georgia
school of law

*Providing innovative
legal tools and strategies
to help preserve land,
water and scenic beauty
while promoting the
creation of communities
responsive to human and
environmental needs*

The state of Georgia is under tremendous growth pressure. This growth is creating short-term economic gain for the state, but it has a cost.

- Decreased air and water quality resulting in increasing respiratory illness and drinking water treatment costs.
- Accelerated habitat destruction creating an increase in imperiled species.
- Increased property taxes to pay for additional schools and infrastructure expansion.
- Heightened financial pressure to convert timber and farm land for residential and commercial use.
- Inflated housing prices beyond the means of ordinary working people.
- Intensified competition between various regions for scarce water resources.
- Loss of individual town character resulting in areas becoming more alike and less attractive.
- More traffic gridlock as metropolitan areas continue to sprawl.



Conservation

Most, if not all, of these consequences can be avoided or managed if growth is planned carefully. To this end, the Land Use Clinic is promoting the use of growth management tools that protect greenspace, cluster development away from sensitive resources, preserve farmland, control storm water and other non-point source water pollution, and promote affordable housing and environment- and human-friendly building and zoning models.

State agencies and local governments turn to the Land Use Clinic to devise practical solutions to the land use challenges they are facing. Also, nonprofit organizations, private enterprise, landowners, and even individuals seek the services of the clinic to improve the communities and environments in which they exist.

Protection

Initiated by UGA faculty members Laurie Fowler and Alex Scherr, the Land Use Clinic is managed by attorney Jamie Baker Roskie. Faculty and staff from the UGA School of Law and other departments provide additional expertise. Law students staff the clinic and research and draft documents.

If you are facing a unique land use challenge and need expertise to explore the alternatives available and find a workable solution, please contact the clinic at:

Land Use Clinic

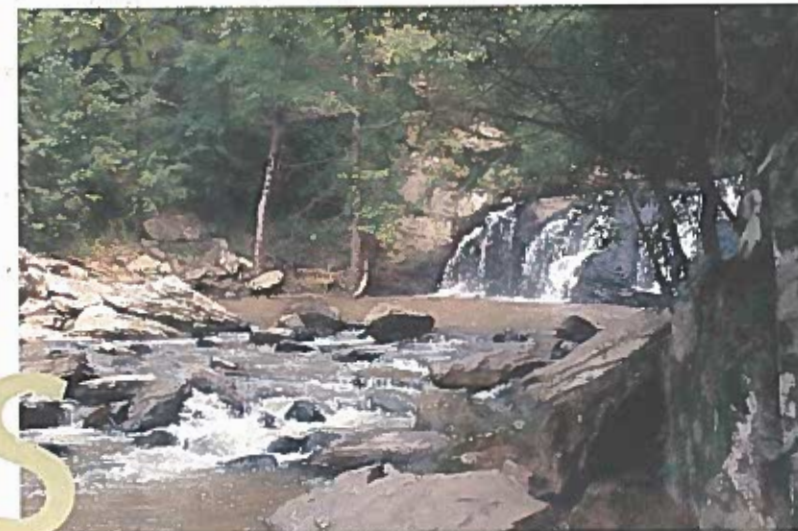
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Solutions

The Land Use Clinic has enjoyed considerable success since its establishment in the fall of 2002. Areas of expertise include:

- **Transferable development rights** – the clinic has assisted several local governments considering TDR programs, including Athens-Clarke County, Thomas County, and Newton County. Studies conducted have helped to develop programs for preserving land through private transactions between landowners in sensitive areas and developers who are creating higher density projects in appropriate areas.
- **Water quality protection** – through collaboration with the River Basin Center, the clinic has helped to draft regulations for several communities to protect water quality through reducing impervious cover (roads, parking lots, buildings, and sidewalks) and minimizing stormwater runoff. The clinic also works with jurisdictions to create and improve stream buffer and other water quality ordinances. Clients include the City of Jefferson and local governments in the Etowah and Upper Altamaha watersheds.
- **Quality growth** – the clinic helps communities to implement “smart growth” by preserving open space, ensuring high quality, energy-efficient buildings, and providing affordable housing. Projects in this arena include: guidebooks and model ordinances for the revitalization of strip corridors, regulation of billboards, control of “big box” development, and development of inclusionary zoning ordinances to help ensure affordable living opportunities for all residents.
- **Environmental justice** – through collaboration with the public interest firm GreenLaw and the Gainesville-based Newtown Florist Club, the clinic is working to help communities where low-income minority neighborhoods are disproportionately impacted by industrial pollution. Potential solutions include greater neighborhood participation in local permitting decisions, and stronger local regulations on industrial uses.



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