

POTENTIAL FALL 2007 PRACTICUM PROJECTS

1. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Source Identification and Management Plan

There aren't many examples in Georgia of impaired waters actually being cleaned up as a result of the TMDL process. We have the opportunity to change that! The mayor of the City of Gordon and the head of Athens-Clarke County's (ACC) stormwater management program have asked us to survey their streams (Little Commissioners Creek and West Fork Trail Creek respectively) to identify sources of fecal coliform impairment and develop a plan for reducing or eliminating those sources. The plan would include the economics of various strategies. We will need to monitor the sites in order to document a reduction in pollution loading. This project will involve field work (actually walking and monitoring the stream), possible interviews with local government staff and personnel responsible for pollution sources), legal and other research, analysis and report drafting.

Clients: City of Gordon and Athens-Clarke County; 4-5 students needed

2. Model Greywater Ordinance for Athens-Clarke County

Currently ACC does not allow reuse of greywater from sinks and washing machines. They have requested our assistance in reevaluating this policy. This project would include (a) developing a report describing the risks and benefits of a greywater policy, where greywater use is currently allowed in Georgia and in other jurisdictions in the U.S. and under what conditions and (b) drafting a greywater ordinance. We expect these products will be used by other local governments in the state as well. This project will involve web research, legal research, interviews, analysis and report and ordinance drafting.

Client: Athens-Clarke County. 2 students needed

3. Develop annotated source of environmental finance resources for Georgia communities

Many of the local government elected officials and staff we surveyed for the Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence asked for information regarding funding sources for all sorts of watershed projects ranging from outreach and education to restoration. One of last semester's practicum students took a stab at developing a handbook describing these various funding sources; what we need to do now is to provide at least one Georgia case study for each source. Stacy Isaacs of the North Carolina Environmental Finance Center (her office is located in Atlanta) has offered to provide finishing touches if a practicum student will research and draft the case studies. This project will involve web research, interviews (phone, email or personal visits) with local and state government staff, analysis and report drafting. WE NEED TO SHOW PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THIS PROJECT AT A STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON OCTOBER 19TH.

Client: Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence; 1 student needed.

4. Stormwater Retrofitting at Whitehall Mill Lofts

The old Whitehall Mill on the Oconee River off of Whitehall Road has been converted to condominiums. The roofs and parking lots of the mill are direct sources of stormwater into the river. Last semester a practicum student identified several potential measures for managing that stormwater. The condominium association is interested in following up on these measures; this project would entail determining which are most cost-effective, procuring funding for the project/s (probably won't be too hard), designing them and if possible, actually building them this semester.

Client: Whitehall Mill Lofts Condominium Association; 2-3 students needed

5. UGA and ACC Ownership of the Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division expect the IWE to continue after their initial funding expires. One of the ways this could happen is through the adoption by UGA and ACC of the river or portions of the river. What exactly would this kind of "adoption" mean; where has it been done before, what issues would be tackled by the respective players, in what order, by whom specifically and how and what kinds of resources would be needed? What kinds of marketing materials would be needed? This project will involve research about the Oconee River and its threats, web research, interviews (phone, email or personal visits) with local and state government staff and other stakeholders, analysis, report drafting and a great deal of imagination.

Client: Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence; 2-3 students needed

6. Lake Oconee Clean Lakes Study

Lake Oconee has become a tremendous revenue driver for the State of Georgia and several middle-Georgia counties. This lake also is suffering from some significant water quality problems, including first stages of eutrophication. A provision of the federal Clean Water Act calls for the development of "Clean Lakes Studies" that document pollution sources and identify clean-up strategies for every lake. Should a Clean Lakes Study be done for Lake Oconee? What would it include? How can funding be obtained for such a study? How should the University of Georgia be involved? .

This project will involve research about Lake Oconee and its threats, including a report produced by last semester's practicum students, other research, interviews (phone, email or personal visits) with local and state government staff and other stakeholders, analysis, report drafting and, again, a great deal of imagination.

Client: Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence; 2-3 students needed

Note: Projects 5 and 6 can be combined!

7. Economic Incentives for Land Protection

Over ten years ago, a group of conservation-minded folks purchased a large tract of land on the Broad River and developed a community (condominium arrangement but each lot is about 10 acres) called Peyton Ferry Farm. These folks would like our assistance in helping identify the most appropriate strategy for protecting their land and helping them realize some kind of tax relief (property tax at a minimum but they are also interested in income tax deductions and credits) by providing permanent or 10-year protection of their common land. The chief tax assessor in Elbert County is waiting for the results of our research to make a property tax determination. UGA CED alumnus Sara Schatz, who developed the condominium concept for her masters thesis) has multiple maps, plats, and ariel photos of the Farm that we can use as well as the condominium declarations and by-laws, etc. Strategies that might be appropriate include signing the community up for the 10-year environmentally sensitive program under the state's current use valuation program (I think we'd be the first) or signing them up for a permanent conservation easement and walking them through the process of getting both income tax credits (via law passed by Georgia legislature last year) and the more traditional deductions. This project will involve at least one site visit, legal research, interviews, report drafting and possibly easement drafting.

Client: Peyton Ferry Farm; 2 students needed