

**Initiative for Watershed Excellence
Upper Altamaha Pilot**

UGA River Basin Center

Dear Upper Altamaha stakeholder,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this survey process. The Initiative for Watershed Excellence is a public service and outreach project of the UGA River Basin Center made possible by Clean Water Act Section 319 funding. Your participation in the prioritization phase will help ensure the success of this community-based watershed initiative. The survey results will be used to prioritize projects and customize the implementation process to best meet individual community needs. Our goals are to:

(1) Provide hands-on, practical products and services to increase the capacity of local stakeholders committed to improving or maintaining the natural and economic resources of their watersheds

(2) Help communities identify watershed-based problems and develop local solutions to protect water quality throughout the Upper Altamaha river watershed (a map of the project focus area is attached). We will do this by offering a wide range of services, chosen by your community, to stakeholders throughout the watershed. UGA faculty and staff will assist your community with planning and implementation of water resource protection projects specifically designed for your watershed. A critical part of the Initiative is to give students at UGA and other colleges in the area first hand knowledge of water resource protection initiatives. Each step of planning and implementation will involve students from a variety of disciplines. Examples of services we can provide to

communities include assistance with: landowner outreach, watershed mapping/GIS, drafting of conservation ordinances, BMP's, TMDL's, bio-solids management and land application, conservation subdivision information, biological monitoring, biological watershed characterization, etc. Because of the important work that you do, your input is very valuable and will help us determine which services are most needed by your community.

Please complete the attached survey. If a section does not apply to you or your community, feel free to skip that section. Please focus on the areas that will most benefit your watershed. **For each section that applies to your community, please provide examples of specific projects that are locally important for water quality protection.** Examples include: 1. Under the **Training** section, "Our local land trust would like assistance planning a land use planning tools workshop for elected officials"; 2. Under the **Ordinance research and development** section, "The City of Ideal is developing phase two of their Comprehensive Management Plan and would like assistance drafting a stormwater ordinance"; 3. Under the **Watershed awareness & water resources education** section, "Ideal County would like assistance planning an aquatic natural resources tour for elected officials". 4. Under the **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** section, "The cities of Ideal, Unique and Perfect, request assistance mapping sensitive environmental areas that overlap the 3 city boundaries, and request assistance planning for their protection".

If you have specific questions while you are completing the survey, or if you would like to discuss the project further, please contact Christine Rodick.

Please provide us with the following information:

Your name will be kept confidential.

Your name _____

Agency/organization _____

Mailing address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

The following are services that the UGA River Basin Center and a consortium of agencies and other university and college faculty, staff and students may provide to your community. Please read through the list and choose the five (5) services most needed by your community at this time.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)(computer generated mapping)

- ___ Provide necessary data layers to support watershed planning and management
- ___ Project and analyze future growth (accurately measure current and forecast future land use)
- ___ Develop and analyze build-out scenarios incorporating low impact development planning (LID) and other measures protective of water quality
- ___ Identify sensitive environmental areas or critical populations
- ___ Other _____

Specific project(s):

Economics

- ___ Identify economic incentives for watershed planning & management
- ___ Determine economic value (including services provided and tourism potential) of a river, stream, or wetland

Specific project(s):

Greenspace preservation

- ___ Develop priorities and funding strategies for land acquisition that protects water quality
- ___ Develop educational materials and other support needed to recruit conservation easements that protect water quality
- ___ Develop purchase of development rights (PDR) program and/or transfer of development rights (TDR) program to protect water quality
- ___ Provide legal and technical assistance to local land trust

- ___ Identify potential Brownfield redevelopment sites and develop Brownfield redevelopment strategy for the community

Specific project(s):

Onsite sewage (septic)

- ___ Develop management policies for on-site sewage
- ___ Inventory/identify tanks and leakages

Specific project(s):

Ordinance research and development on:

- ___ Riparian buffer / floodplain
- ___ Stormwater
- ___ Illicit discharge
- ___ Low impact development/better site design
- ___ Conservation/cluster subdivision
- ___ Transferable development rights
- ___ Erosion & Sedimentation
- ___ Large lot/agricultural zoning
- ___ Resources protection zoning (overlay zoning)
- ___ Tree ordinance

Specific project(s):

Water & sewer crossings, road crossings (bridges), and utility right of ways

- ___ Identify problem areas, (e.g., obstructing fish passage, delivering sediment)
- ___ Develop better design guidelines
- ___ Pursue bio-solids management options such as land application

Specific project(s):

Watershed awareness & water resources education

- ___ Create educational materials (posters, newsletters, displays, brochures, etc.)
- ___ Identify ways to use the media (newspaper, radio, TV, video, internet)
- ___ Coordinate and facilitate stakeholder input and outreach groups
- ___ Provide organizational assistance (incorporating, obtaining tax-exempt status, developing a work plan, etc.) to organizations working in this area
- ___ Identify and develop programs to educate elected officials, government employees, civic groups, and the public
- ___ **Develop a local Master Watershed Stewardship Program**

One potential outcome of the Initiative for Watershed Excellence is a program that will certify citizens as Master Watershed Stewards. The Master Watershed Stewardship Program is designed to motivate and educate local citizens about their watershed and involve them in community watershed projects. This program invites citizens to participate in several workshops that cover watershed concepts in modules. Then, the participants are asked to volunteer 40-hours of service in their watershed on a community watershed project. The main purpose of a community watershed project for participants is to offer a method to apply their knowledge of watershed concepts and gain satisfaction of making a difference in their watershed. **The result will be an informed group of local community members who can be called upon by their neighbors as a resource for watershed information.**
Specific project(s):

Monitoring

- ___ Ambient watershed (stations, events, parameters, costs, data analysis, Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP))
- ___ BMP effectiveness
- ___ Citizen efforts
- ___ Pollutant sources
- ___ Illicit discharges
- ___ Biological (threatened & endangered species)
- ___ Inventory data already available within a watershed

Specific project(s):

Surveys to determine:

- ___ BMP compliance (agriculture, forestry, urban) within a watershed
- ___ Stakeholder awareness / public perception / demographics
- ___ Use / value of resource to locals

Specific project(s):

Training (specify audience) on:

- ___ Erosion and sedimentation (audience: _____)
- ___ Stormwater management (audience: _____)
- ___ Agriculture (audience: _____)
- ___ Forestry (audience: _____)
- ___ Land use planning tools (audience: _____)
- ___ On how to be good watershed stewards for general public

Specific project(s):

Funding of water protection efforts

- ___ Grant writing / identifying funding opportunities workshops / federal program training

- ___ Stormwater utility development
- ___ Develop permit fee programs

Specific project(s):

Restoration activities

- ___ Riparian buffers
- ___ Wetlands

Specific project(s):

Enforcement

• ___ Develop better enforcement protocols at development sites
 Long-term source water protection planning

• ___ Watershed Plan Development
 TMDL's

- ___ Develop TMDL Implementation Plan

Specific project(s):

General questions

For your town/county, please provide contact information for people who are especially knowledgeable about local surface waters.

Over the past five years, more or less, have you been aware of any local problems with surface water (e.g., unusual fish kills, visible pollutants, please list type if known)

For your town/county, please list potential surface water issues.

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

Do you think that most of the citizens/elected officials living in the community where you are working could answer the following questions? Please check yes or no.

Know where their drinking water come from? Yes__ No__

Know where their sewage goes? Yes__ No__

Where the stormwater goes? Yes__ No__

Is wastewater treated to remove pollutants before it is discharged? Yes__
 No__

Know what surface water is primarily used for? Yes__ No__

Know what a TMDL is? Yes__ No__
Know what an impervious surface is and how it is related to water quality/quantity? Yes__ No__
Know how decisions my community makes about land use and zoning impact water quality? Yes__ No__

What, if any, specific projects and events have been held in your community to raise public awareness about water resource issues?

What groups or government agencies are active in addressing concerns about water resources in your community?

Briefly describe media involvement/coverage (print, TV, radio, etc.) of water quality issues in your community. Is there a particular reporter or announcer who has taken a special interest in reporting on water quality issues?

Please provide additional comments if necessary:

Thanks for your time. Please return this survey to:

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