



GEORGIA PLANNER

Newsletter of the Georgia Planning Association, A Chapter of the American Planning Association

APRIL 2001

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FOUR GEORGIANS ELECTED AS FELLOWS IN AICP'S COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

Since the founding of the College of Fellows in 1999, four Georgians have been elected as Fellows of AICP: Leon S. Eplan, Arthur C. Nelson and Thomas H. Roberts, all in the Class of 2000, and Jeff Wingfield, in this year's class. Election to Fellow is one of the highest honors that AICP bestows upon a member. It is presented in recognition of the achievements of a planner as an individual, elevating the Fellow before the public and the profession as a model planner with significant contributions to planning and society. The honor is granted to planners who have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public/community service, and leadership.

The statements read at the formal induction on each of the honorees are as follows:

LEON S. EPLAN, FAICP

Few planners better reflect the emergence of our profession in post-war America. For four decades Leon Eplan has been an innovator, an advocate and a visionary. His work as Commissioner of Planning in Atlanta helped to shape that dynamic city. Twice elected national President of the American Institute of Planners, he was at the birth of several of our planning organizations: the Georgia Planning Association (he served as its first President), the Planning Accreditation Board (he was a member of the initial board) and the American Planning Association (he helped to launch APA while serving as President of AIP). And, as Director of Georgia Tech's Graduate City Planning Program, he helped modernize and broaden that curriculum, teaching and mentoring the next generation of America's urban planners.

ARTHUR C. NELSON, FAICP

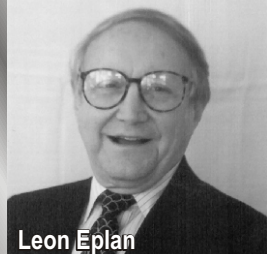
Arthur C. Nelson, Professor in the City Planning Program at Georgia Tech's College of Architecture, is honored for scholarship that relates land economics and development costs to planning and land use regulation. There are not more than two score planners who have contributed so much in research to planners' understanding of development economics, impacts of development, and growth management theory and practice.

THOMAS H. ROBERTS, FAICP

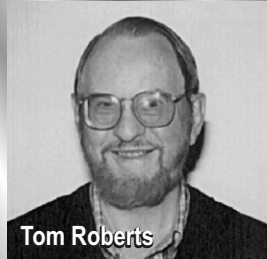
Tom Roberts has a 45-year planning career in city, county and regional planning, teaching and writing, as well as in public service at the national level. Throughout his career, he has stressed two essential features of his professions: the comprehensive, integrative nature of planning, and the practice of planning as a process, including continuous refinement, revision and direct linkages to implementation. He has demonstrated unusual skill in assembling and directing multi-disciplinary teams, both as a public official and as a private consultant. He has been a lifelong advocate for the planning profession, having serviced as a member of two AIP chapter executive committees; chapter president, member of the AIP Board of Examiners, site visitor for the Planning Accreditation Board, Executive Director of AIP, Board member, Vice President and President of ASPO, and a Founding Director of APA.

J. D. WINGFIELD, Jr., FAICP

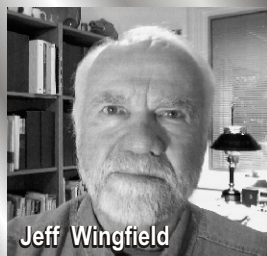
Jeff Wingfield's career progressed from town planner in Chapel Hill to planning director for the Atlanta region. For the last 21 years of active professional life he managed the Atlanta office of Hammer, Siler, George Associates. He chaired the Georgia Chapter of AIP and was elected to the AICP Commission. In retirement, Jeff has consulted on light rail system impact in Minnesota, Florida and Arizona.



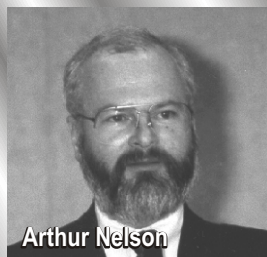
Leon Eplan



Tom Roberts



Jeff Wingfield



Arthur Nelson

From the President...

New Orleans and Beyond

To borrow a phrase from my first career, the early geologist Hutton said, "Nothing is constant on earth except change itself." APA is indeed a dynamic organization, changing to accommodate the passage of time and the needs of the members. We have a new president, Bruce McClendon, AICP, and a new Organizational Development Plan (which you can see on APA's website). We have a new Executive Director, Paul Farmer, AICP, who has just taken over upon Frank So's retirement. We have a new policy guide on manufactured housing, also available on the website. APA is undertaking an educational video which will be nationally broadcast on the 200-member public broadcasting system next year. We have a new Executive Committee for Chapter President's Council, and I am honored to stay on as CPC Liaison to Divisions. We're gearing up for the next national election, and I've been appointed to serve on the nominating committee. I am pleased to be a small part of the change that will continue to keep our organization responsive to the membership.

The APA annual conference in New Orleans last month provided a great opportunity for networking and, in the words of Stephen Covey, "sharpening the saw". Many of the sessions I attended presented case studies, not new techniques, but new applications of what we planners already know. All of the organized functions, and most of the impromptu ones, created the stage for planner "war stories," success stories, and validation both professional and personal. Planning conferences, regardless of scale, theme, or location, refresh and recharge us and provide us momentum and enrichment.

I have long believed that our chapter conference benefits our members the most. Mark your calendars and join us October 24 through 26 at Jekyll Island. We're constructing an ambitious agenda: four separate tracks comprising 32 sessions (and don't forget sight-seeing, golfing and fishing!). The interests represented on the agenda are varied, including water and other environmental issues, transportation, economic development, historic preservation, and land use law. Our presenters will bring us a wealth of experience from local, state, and national perspective. Don't miss what is sure to be our best conference ever!

Respectfully,
Lisa Hollingsworth



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Report from the Sixth District Dayton L. Sherrouse, AICP, District Director

Several years ago planners within the greater Augusta area organized as the CSRA Planners Group for the purpose of meeting on a quarterly basis. Since Augusta is located on the state line with South Carolina, the group also includes planners in

Aiken County, SC-our immediate neighbor in South Carolina. The group is hosted and meets at a different location each quarter to review and discuss plans or programs related to that specific meeting area. The schedule and hosts for the 2001 is as follows:

- January 17, 2001-Hosted by the 30901 Development Corporation at the Beulah Grove Community Resource Center, Augusta, GA
- April 18, 2001-Hosted by the Lower Savannah Council of Government at their offices in Aiken, SC.
- July 18, 2001-Host and location to be determined.
- October 17, 2001-Host and location to be determined.

The meetings usually start at 11:00 and end at 1:00. The meeting includes lunch. For further information about meeting dates and contact Terri Turner, current chairperson for the group, at the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission, 706-821-1796. The group also publishes a quarterly newspaper about projects within the district.

Georgia Planning Association 2001 GPA AWARDS PROGRAM

NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use a separate form for each nomination (Projects may be nominated for more than one category).
2. Projects should be in progress by July 2, 2001. Eligible comprehensive plans are those adopted between September 1, 2000 and June 29, 2001.
3. Nominees must either reside or practice in Georgia. Projects or primary contributor(s) must be located in Georgia. Both GPA members and the public are invited to submit nominations.
4. Nominations for local government projects must be submitted by the affected local government.
5. Applications must be returned to GPA by Tuesday, July 31, 2001. Plan documents, publications, photographs, slides, maps and any other supporting documentation to be considered by the judges in making above awards must be submitted at the same time.
6. Provide a one-page summary to explain why the nomination should win the award, and how it relates to the evaluation criteria.
7. If you have any questions, contact Alex Ikefuna, Chairperson, GPA Awards Committee at (912)651-6520, or email: aikefuna@ci.savannah.ga.us.
8. Address applications and supporting materials to:
Attn: GPA Awards
c/o Alex Ikefuna
City of Savannah
Department of Community Planning & Development
P. O. Box 1027, 6 East Bay Street, 3rd Floor
Savannah, Ga 31402

Recipients will be announced at the Awards Program at the Georgia Planning Association's Fall Conference on October 24 - 26, 2001, at Jekyll Island.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The GPA awards program is intended to recognizing individuals, studies, processes and projects that demonstrate an exceptional level of excellence, and to recognize persons who have made outstanding contributions to the field of planning. An unbiased jury of professional planners will be responsible for selecting award recipients. The following general criteria will be used to evaluate each project nominated and the work of individuals nominated.

Innovation - Originality of concept or appreciable refinement of existing techniques or procedures.

Transferability - Potential application in other areas or to other projects.

Quality - Excellence of thought, analysis, writing, graphics and character of presentation.

Implementation - Effectiveness: Proposals either carried out or show promise of doing so.

Comprehensiveness - Planning principles observed, especially their effects on other public objectives.

CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

1. OUTSTANDING PLANNING PROJECTS AWARDS

A. Outstanding Planning Document

This category will be awarded to acknowledge the best planning document. In nominating such plans, the following will be included: comprehensive plans, solid waste management plans, site/area plans, transportation plans, parks plans, and other planning documents.

B. Outstanding Plan Implementation

This category of nomination is aimed at awarding the successful implementation of a plan. For example, the realization of a historic district preservation plan, the implementation of a fiscal management plan, and/or the achievement of a community vision would all fall under this category.

2. OUTSTANDING PLANNING PROCESS AWARDS

A. Innovative and Effective Planning Process

This award is intended to recognize a distinguished planning activity that demonstrates distinction and exceptional planning character. The category included citizen participation, dispute resolution, interagency coordination, financing, etc.

B. Media Involvement

This award will be used to acknowledge the successful use of media coverage to support public education efforts for a planning project. It will recognize the outstanding individual or media program that has informed and educated the public.

C. Educational Tool

This award is given for a creative educational project/program or tool that promotes planning. It will recognize a program, project or tool that makes a significant contribution to the planning process.

3. OUTSTANDING HISTORIC

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PRESERVATION PROJECT AWARD

A. Creative and Innovative Historic Preservation Project

This award is not for a particular building, but for a planning document associated with a project, historic district, or planning process. Examples include planning process reports, design guidelines, feasibility reports, historic structure reports and preservation plans.

4. OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD FOR SPECIAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Creative Use of the Planning Process to Address a Need Outside the Normal Sphere of Planning

This award is intended for an initiative that illustrates how a community or jurisdiction used the planning process to address a need outside the normal sphere of planning. Emphasis is placed on the success of planning in a non-traditional settings. The award seeks to recognize projects that expand public understanding of planners and the planning process. Eligible projects include, but not limited to, efforts aimed at community policing or drug prevention; neighborhood outreach initiatives or community-based capacity building; programs designed for specialized population; public art or cultural efforts; or initiatives for youth.

5. PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN PLANNING AWARDS

A. Distinguished Achievement in Planning

This award is given to a professional planner who has promoted good planning practices and rendered outstanding technical assistance to Georgia communities from 1999 - 2000. The individual should demonstrate work of a high level of excellence and effectiveness through distinctive practice, writing or teaching.

6. DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

A. Distinguished Leadership Award

This award is presented to an individual elected to public office for a significant contribution to planning. The individual should demonstrate effectiveness in formulating ideas and policies that further the cause of planning. He should also show within what sphere of influence his effectiveness has been realized. **GPA AWARD APPLICATION FORM**

1. Nominee:
2. Phone:
3. Project Name:
4. Address:

(Do not complete items 5-8 if this a nomination for Distinguished Achievement in Planning or Leadership)

5. Nominator:
6. Phone:
7. Address:
8. Signature of Nominator:

AWARD CATEGORIES

1. OUTSTANDING PLANNING PROJECT AWARDS

- Outstanding Planning Documents
- Outstanding Plan Implementation

2. OUTSTANDING PLANNING PROCESS AWARDS

- Innovative and Effective Planning Process
- Media Involvement
- Educational Project/Program or Tool

3. OUTSTANDING HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT AWARD

- Creative and Innovative Historic Preservation Project

4. OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD FOR SPECIAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

- Creative Use of the Planning Process to Address a Need Outside the Normal Sphere of Planning

5. PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN PLANNING AWARD

- Distinguished Achievement in Planning

6. DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

- Distinguished Leadership Award for an Elected Official Explain why this nomination should win the award in this category and how it relates to the evaluation criteria (Attach Additional sheets as needed).

List items or materials that are being submitted in support of this nomination.

Attach a one page abstract or summary of each plan, planning project or study submitted. Each abstract or summary may contain brief excerpts from the principal document to emphasize any major points. For the Professional Achievement in Planning category, summarize the nominee's recent outstanding contributions to planning in Georgia.

2001 REPORT ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*By: Jerry Weitz, Ph.D., AICP
Vice President for Legislative Affairs*

This report summarizes bills of interest to planners that, as of March 19, 2001, have passed the House, Senate, or both. All bills can be viewed, and their status updated, by going to: [http://www.2001session.com/ USERVISITOR/](http://www.2001session.com/USERVISITOR/).

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act (SB 130, House and Senate adopted).

The planning district would be responsible for developing comprehensive regional and watershed-specific plans for stormwater management, wastewater treatment, water supply, water conservation, and protection of water quality. The district's geography would according to the Georgia Municipal Association apply to 18 counties in metropolitan Atlanta. However, the geography appears to be somewhat flexible, in that the governing bodies of counties with populations of 100,000 or less can remove themselves from the planning district with the approval of the Director of the State Environmental Protection Division (EPD), and other counties can opt into the planning district. The bill describes the composition of the "Governing Board" of the planning district and establishes EPD and the Atlanta Regional Commission as the initial staff to the district. Underlying the board is a set of "technical coordinating committees" and separate "basin advisory councils" for major rivers, Lake Lanier, and watersheds upstream of the district.

The bill specifies details of a work program for the district. Within one year, it shall prepare a model ordinance(s) for local governments to manage stormwater and a short-term plan to ease immediate wastewater capacity constraints. Within two years, it must prepare: 1) a district-wide watershed management plan with provisions for water quality monitoring and total maximum daily loads (TMDL); 2) a long-range wastewater management plan; and 3) a water supply and water conservation management plan. Local governments must adopt the model stormwater management ordinance(s) prepared by the district (or an alternative at least as effective), as well as, implement applicable portions of the district's watershed management, wastewater management, and water supply and water conservation management plans. Local governments that fail to do so would be denied water and wastewater

permits under the purview of Georgia's Director of EPD and grants or loans related to stormwater, wastewater, and water supply projects.

Joint Comprehensive Water Plan Study Committee and Water Plan Advisory Committee (SR 142, House and Senate Adopted).

This resolution cites recent droughts, potential saltwater intrusion into the Floridan Aquifer, depletion of water for agricultural use in the Flint River basin, the tri-state water allocation issues, and other findings in support of establishing a study committee on water resource issues in Georgia. The committee would study water issues and recommend the details of a state comprehensive water plan. An advisory committee would be established to support the study committee. A study report would be due by September 1, 2002.

Redevelopment Powers Law Amendment (HB 409, House and Senate Adopted). This bill would amend Chapter 44, Title 36, O.C.G.A., to expand the meaning of "redevelopment," broaden eligibility of areas to be designated as "redevelopment areas," and increase the geographic scope beyond "urbanized areas" to include economically and socially depressed nonurban areas. A redevelopment area could include "one or more natural or historical assets" which have not been protected. Another bill would also amend the Redevelopment Powers Law in some minor respects (see **HB 366**, which passed the House and Senate).

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Amendment (HB 474, House Adopted, Senate Read Twice). This bill would amend Chapter 66A, Title 36, O.C.G.A., to add definitions of "receiving area" and "sending area." The bill would also require a map or description of sending and receiving areas as a part of any local TDR ordinance. Public notice and a public hearing on any TDR ordinance and on all actions to transfer development rights would still be required, although the bill exempts "consolidated governments" (e.g., Athens-Clarke County) from the requirement to hold a hearing on each individual transfer of development rights.

Annexation Law Amendments. O.C.G.A. § 36-36-70, which now applies to counties with populations of not less than 480,000 and not more than 580,000 according to the U.S. decennial census of 1980 or any future such census, prohibits municipal annexations of unincorporated property

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2001 Report On General Assembly Continued

where the county provides certain services or has included the area in a "comprehensive zoning plan," unless the county governing authority approves the annexation. **SB 136** (Senate approved, House read twice) would make this section of the annexation statute applicable only to counties with populations of more than one million according to the U.S. Census of 1980 or future census.

O.C.G.A. § 36-36-3 now specifies technical standards for preparing maps and surveys of annexed areas which must be a part of a report submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). **HB 443** (Senate and House adopted) would delete the technical specifications for annexation plats and, in essence, defer the requirement for surveying and mapping the annexed area until the municipality's next annexation report is due. This bill would also delete DCA's mandate to supply technical assistance to cities in preparing annexation reports; such assistance would be optional.

Joint Study Committee on Urban Road Building Guidelines (HR 130, House Adopted, Senate Read Twice). This resolution would create an 11-member study committee which would report by December 1, 2001, on how to make state road building standards more flexible and pedestrian-friendly.

Power Alley Development Authority Act (HB 744, House Adopted, Senate Read Twice). This bill would amend Chapter 3, Title 12, O.C.G.A., to create a nine-member authority with jurisdiction in the counties containing any part of U.S. Highway 280 running from Columbus to Savannah. It would have power to acquire property and finance and construct various projects.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA"

Deborah A. Miness

*Assistant Director,
Office of Coordinated Planning,
Georgia Department of Community Affairs,
Atlanta, Georgia.*

INTRODUCTION

All of Georgia's 692 cities and counties are required to adopt local regulations protecting wetlands, water supply watersheds, aquifer recharge areas, protected river segments and protected mountains that occur within their jurisdictions. So far about 250 governments have adopted the required regulations. The balance will address the requirements according to an established schedule linked to comprehensive plan implementation. A number of implementation challenges have been identified. Two critical local issues are how to address the local need for occasional variances and how to insure enforcement of local regulations in jurisdictions lacking sufficient administrative capacity.

DCA administers the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, which guide local governments in developing, preparing and adopting their comprehensive plans. These standards include those minimum criteria known as "Environmental Planning Criteria" developed by DNR for protection of the state's vital natural resources.

The established deadline for adoption of local ordinances consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria is usually one year following adoption of the community's first Short Term Work Program (STWP) update.

DCA conducts the compliance review of local environmental regulations submitted to address the Environmental Planning Criteria. DNR retains the authority and the

responsibility, as author of the criteria, to interpret their provisions as implementation proceeds. Common or widely applicable questions on meaning and interpretation (and the answers provided by DNR) are provided on the DCA web site at: www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/enviroquestion.html.

Implementation of Environmental Criteria and related issues.

WETLANDS

All local governments containing wetlands within their jurisdiction (based on the National Wetlands Inventory) are required to coordinate local permitting with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permitting process. Local governments must ensure that, through granting a local permit, they do not inadvertently allow or encourage alteration of wetlands under the "jurisdiction" of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Local governments must also adopt and maintain on site a "generalized" wetland map (based on NWI, or more accurate wetlands information) as part of the local ordinance for reference purposes.

Local governments are required to assign responsibility to someone at the local level to compare a proposed project location with the adopted Generalized Wetlands Map. If the proposed project appears to be near or within a wetland boundary, and the project is one that could alter jurisdictional wetlands, the responsible party must refer the applicant to the Corps of Engineers.

Continued on page 7

Prior to issuance of a local permit or permission to proceed, the Corps must make a determination of whether or not jurisdictional wetlands may be involved on the site.

Implementation challenges include crafting local ordinances that do not result in either too few or too many development applications being sent to the Corps of Engineers for review. Implementation of the required coordination process is extremely difficult in a local setting where there is no formal permitting process or where there is little or no administrative capacity to implement local ordinances.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

Local governments containing any part of a water supply watershed within their jurisdiction must adopt protective measures, regardless of whether or not the intake is located within a local government's jurisdiction or the government uses any drinking water from that source. All existing and proposed water supply watersheds and reservoirs must be addressed. Finally, the local ordinance must include applicable reservoir protection measures or refer to a separate Reservoir Management Plan.

Protective measures range from protecting against pollution from hazardous waste handlers to stream buffers and limits on total impervious surface area within a water supply watershed.

Implementing protective measures for water supply watersheds is technically challenging and related requirements, such as for Reservoir Management Plans, are even more so. Implementing impervious surface restrictions is particularly challenging in urbanized areas where existing development already accounts for a substantial proportion of the allowable amount. This has led some

communities to take advantage of the provision in the criteria for alternative protective measures, which must be approved by EPD as providing the same level of protection.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

Approximately 40 percent of Georgians, primarily located in the coastal plain portion of the state, get their drinking water from groundwater sources. Protection of groundwater sources of drinking water is therefore essential.

Every community that contains a groundwater recharge area, as identified on Hydrologic Atlas #18 and #20, must adopt protection measures.

Protective measures include lot size restrictions for residential lots served by individual on-site septic systems within significant recharge areas. The standards for lot sizes are contained within the Department of Human Resources' Manual for On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems (pages M-1 and M-2).

Implementation issues include the difficulty of applying large scale maps to small areas in a local jurisdiction. More recently it has been recognized that better coordination is needed between County Boards of Health (whose employees issue septic tank permits) and local governments once they have adopted stricter standards.

PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS

A *protected river* is defined in statute as a Georgia river that has an average flow rate of at least 400 cubic feet per second. A *protected river corridor* is all land, inclusive of islands, in areas of a protected river and being within 100-feet horizontally on both sides of the river as measured from the uppermost part of the river bank (usually delineated by a break in the slope). The protected area also includes the area between the uppermost part of the riverbank and the water's edge,

although this strip of land is not included as part of the 100-foot buffer requirement contained in the minimum standards.

Local governments containing any part of a State-designated protected river (as delineated on an official map by DNR) must adopt protective measures.

Protective measures include primarily a vegetative buffer along protected river segments, with lot size restrictions and prohibition of certain uses within the buffer. Implementation issues include local government requests for approval of variances from the lot size restrictions. Many local governments have in the past granted approvals for riverfront lots that now do not meet the current regulations. Existing land uses are exempt from the criteria, but must meet specific criteria set forth in rules and statute. However, lots of record are not exempt from these requirements.

CONCLUSION

To Date, a total of 249 local governments have established environmental ordinances consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria. This represents substantial progress in a program that began full implementation in 1997. By 2003, all local governments will have either adopted these environmental regulations or have been officially notified of the requirement that they do so.

In 2000 DCA issued revised guidelines and sample ordinance language to assist local governments in meeting the requirements of the Environmental Planning Criteria. We continue to work with local governments, their Regional Development Centers (which can provide much-needed technical assistance) and other state agencies (such as DNR and DHR) to address local implementation issues such as those identified in this paper.



GIS in Ben Hill County, Georgia

Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, Georgia teamed up to begin the migration from hardcopy maps to a Geographic Information System. Since then the City, County and citizens have reaped the benefits.

The Starting Point.

In the early '90s Ben Hill County, and the City of Fitzgerald, Georgia were faced with developing and adopting a comprehensive plan and enforcing those adoptions per a state mandate. From the bottom up, local officials including the City of Fitzgerald Zoning Administrators recognized that there must be an easier way to effectively enforce their zoning ordinances. Around that same time the local tax office and emergency services were beginning to experience the same growing pains. These encounters prompted calls to RGIS-SG in Valdosta, GA. Since the desired GIS database was to mature and eventually contain information from election districts to emergency routing and parcel ownership, RGIS-SG made the recommendation that Ben Hill County begin with an accurate roads database.

Early Developments

RGIS-SG and local staff first used GPS technology to locate each county and city maintained road, alley and right-of-way. These GPS positions were then converted to a road and right-of-way coverage in the county's GIS. Attribute information such as street name and surface type were encoded in the field using GPS. Since most services such as water, sewer, zoning, etc.

are usually located in the same proximity as streets, the capture of this data was a great tool when geo-referencing future layers. Once the road database had been verified and being regularly maintained, the county proceeded with various other projects further maturing their GIS.

The Ben Hill County Tax Office up to that point had been using hardcopy aerial photography with mylar overlays depicting parcel boundaries. RGIS-SG converted the hardcopy maps to a GIS dataset by means of scanning and digitization, and attribution of each parcel polygon. Now assessors could use their digital rectified aerial photography to identify properties that may need reassessment as well as properties whose acreage and features were not proportional to currently assessed values.

While the tax office additions were ongoing, Zoning Administrators from Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County encoded their planning and zoning boundaries and Emergency Services proceeded with countywide address information being entered into the road database. For emergency dispatching in Ben Hill County, the use of this database offers benefits such as increased response time and accuracy of emergency vehicle routing. This functionality is available to dispatchers via a workstation at the communications center.

The latest interest in GIS is coming from the local Development Authority. With the addition of utility features along with building footprints and other features important to industrial development, the City of Fitzgerald will have a valuable tool for recruiting industry as well as a tool for infrastructure management and planning.

Since the beginning of GIS in Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald, Georgia, users of the data have been increasingly easier to come by. Admittedly, Ben Hill County was hesitant to make the initial investment in the new technology Jack Bryant (County Manager) says but, "It has become a tool we use on a daily basis as situations arise".

Keeping Costs Down

As with any project, both communities wanted to get the most for their dollar, so the implementation of their GIS was carefully planned so as not to duplicate any efforts. Before any data was constructed RGIS-SG explored the possibility of the data already existing at other sites such as state and federal databases. If no satisfactory data had already been developed, then data construction proceeded.

Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald, Georgia both benefited from the GIS and database experience available at RGIS-SG in Valdosta, Georgia. RGIS-SG staff are available to any Southeast U.S. community interested in GIS development. Both communities contract almost exclusively with South Georgia Regional Development Center / RGIS-SG for data development, data maintenance and technical support. Since both organizations are not for profit, both the City and County can continue to keep costs at a minimum while receiving the needed assistance.

Listed below is a sample of the GIS data available to City and County users.

- ♦ Road Centerlines
- ♦ Land Parcels
- ♦ Soil Type Boundaries
- ♦ Land Zoning Boundaries
- ♦ Digital Rectified Aerial Photography
- ♦ Board of Election District & Precinct Boundaries
- ♦ Point Locations of City/County Facilities
- ♦ Existing and Future Land Use Polygons
- ♦ Tree Canopy Coverage
- ♦ Groundwater Recharge Areas
- ♦ Census Block Groups and Tract
- ♦ City / County Boundaries

Software:

The GIS software currently used by Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, Georgia includes ESRI's, ArcView versions 3.1 and 3.2 with Network Analyst extensions at some sites. RGIS-SG and SGRDC developed, maintained and manipulated data using Arc/Info version 7.2.1. Some database functions and services are performed in Oracle version 7. The communities currently use a Windows 98/NT semi-networked environment.

Benefits

While benefits from the development of this GIS can be related to dollars and cents, the long term benefits of GIS development can mean a lot more to communities. Because of more accurate tax assessments based on soil types, the county or it's citizens may collect or save dollars. But in the arena of emergency services, faster arrival times may mean life or death. A dollar amount cannot be placed on this benefit. The fact that governments are making more informed decisions thanks to GIS technology means that everyone in the community can enjoy an overall better quality of life in the future.

Continued on page 9

Planning Success Stories Continued

Listed below are some data sources and construction techniques, that allowed Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, Georgia to build a low cost, high return database. Approximate costs are also listed.

Road Centerlines Vehicles outfitted with global positioning hardware traversed every road and right-of-way identified by the community. Address ranges were added at a later time at the request of the 911 Center using existing hardcopy maps and tabular information provided by the center. Cost: \$5,000.

County-wide parcel boundaries and assessment information Parcels were digitized from individual hardcopy mylars. Cost: \$15,000.

County-wide Zoning classification boundaries Boundaries were digitized from hardcopy maps to create a polygon coverage. Cost: \$2,000.

Soil type boundaries Hardcopy mylars of map pages from the USDA-SCS Soil Survey (1969) were obtained and scanned using a large format b/w scanner. Cost: \$10,000.

City / County facility locations Per a contract with a State agency, South Georgia RDC collected the location of facilities such as Fire Departments, Schools, Water/Sewer facilities, Jails, Public Safety offices, etc using GPS hardware. Free of charge.

Election Precincts & Districts / Registered Voter Locations Maps illustrating current election precincts and districts were delivered to staff and on screen digitization yielded several polygon coverages that represented various electoral districts. Cost: \$1,000.

For More Information....contact Chris Strom or Vance Roberts, Rural Geo-spatial Innovations in America South Georgia, located within South Georgia Regional Development Center, 327 West Savannah Ave, Valdosta, Georgia 31601; 912-333-5277 (phone), or e-mail: cstrom@sgrdc.com, vroberts@sgrdc.com.

Announcements

**Please Note:*

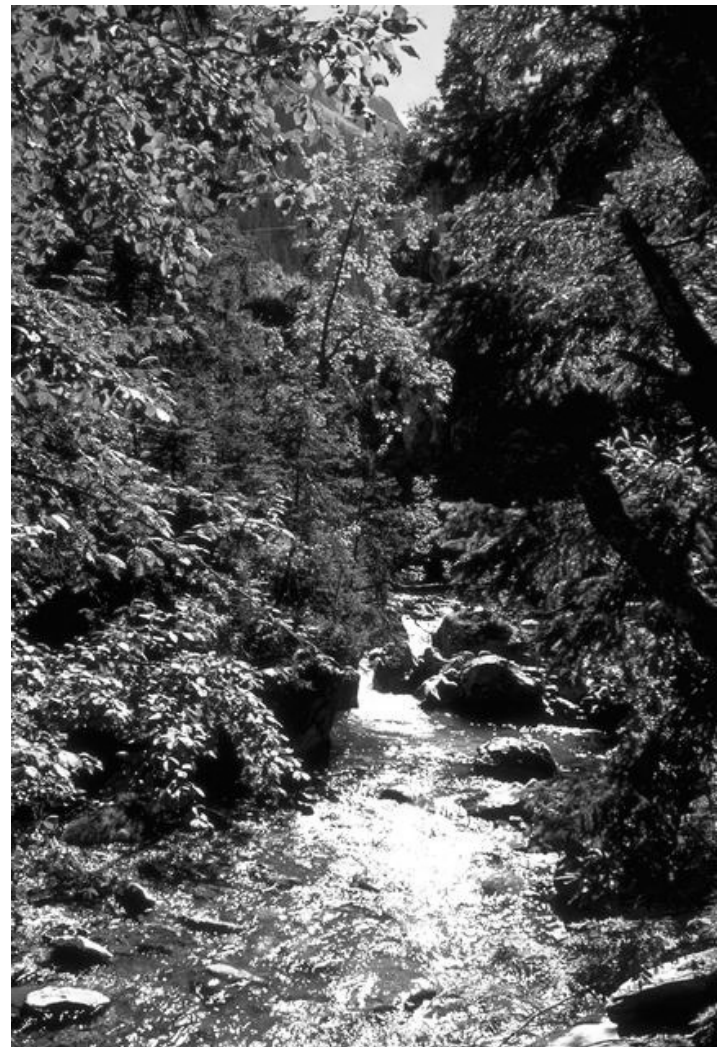
Due to space limitations, we can no longer accept articles exceeding 1,000 words.

Thank You

Obituary

The GPA Board of Directors would like to express our deep sadness at the passing of John Stockbridge, Athens-Clarke County Planning Director.

You will be greatly missed.



"The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it." - Jean Baptiste Moliere



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WORKING TO BETTER OUR COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

this & that

The first GPA Luncheon of the year a great success! Kelly McCutchen of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation gave us a lot of new things to think about! Be sure not to miss the upcoming luncheon on May 4th. More details to come!

AICP National Exam Preparation Course

It's better to take two prep courses than two exams! In addition to GPA's workshop, APA is offering courses in CD-ROM format and through virtual classrooms over the worldwide web. Check out www.planning.org/abtaicp/abtaicp.html for more information, or call 1-800-954-1669.

Want to be added to our newsletter reminder list?

This will ensure that you are notified of all upcoming deadlines for newsletter submittals of job ads, articles and advertisements. If so, send a blank e-mail entitled "GPA" to lucyjenkins@mindspring.com.



J ♦ O ♦ B ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLANNER POSITION

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has a planner position available that requires technical competence and knowledge of the principles and practices of city planning at local, regional and state levels. Above average oral and written communication skills, self-motivation, decision-making skills and flexibility are essential. Knowledge of personal computers, particularly word-processing and spreadsheet applications, is required. The position requires a Master's degree in Planning, Public Administration or a related field, and a minimum of two years of professional experience (or an equivalent combination). This is a Non-Merit position with excellent state benefits and a beginning salary ranging from the mid- to upper \$30's, depending upon qualifications. Send letter of interest and resume, with salary requirement, to Ilona Rutherford, Office of Personnel, 60 Executive Park South, Atlanta, Georgia 30329. No phone calls or faxes please. The position announcement is open until filled.

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GPA Programs not to be missed!

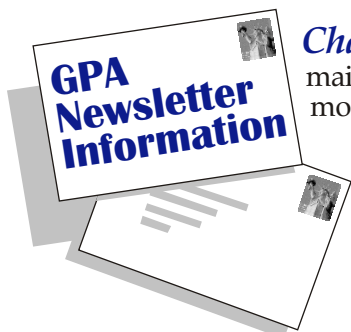
Quarterly Luncheons: May 4, September
First Fridays: May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7.

2001 GPA Conference - It's the Great Gatsby all over again! Be There or Be Square!

Mark your calendars for October 24-26 at the Jekyll Island Club. Our block of rooms went very fast last year, so make your reservations in advance! We welcome all suggestions for programs and entertainment for this year's conference! Contact Denise Abboud at: dbabboud@aol.com

2001 Community Planning Institute

June 1-2, 2001
Holiday Inn - Macon Conference Center
Macon, Georgia



Change of Address: The Georgia Chapter does not maintain address lists. All lists are maintained at the national office and are mailed to the local chapters each month. If you have moved, e-mail: addresschange@planning.org or write to:

Membership Department
APA National Headquarters
122 South Michigan, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60603-6107

Membership Information: If you are in joining the American Planning Association, contact the national headquarters at the address above or call (312) 431-9100.

Submission: The Georgia Planning Association welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photos of planning events or state happenings, calendar listings, job notices, planners on the move, etc. We are always interested in publishing anything you think may be of interest to others throughout the state. Articles may be edited for space. Articles printed in any issue of The Georgia Planner are not the expressed opinion of the Chapter.

Graphics: Graphics are especially welcome - pictures, photos, graphs, charts, etc. We would be happy to return them to you upon request.

Deadline: The deadline for the next issue is March 31, 2001
Send Items for the newsletter to:

Lucy Jenkins
323 East Church Street, Suite 106
Cartersville, Georgia 30120
lucyjenkins@mindspring.com



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