

**UGA River Basin Center
Strategic Plan
2008**

GOAL

To increase the capacity of communities and other individual stakeholders to manage and protect their water and related land resources in a sustainable manner.

MISSION

- To pursue interdisciplinary research and analysis in the areas of water quality and quantity, aquatic biodiversity, and how land use practices impact aquatic resources;
- To assist communities and other stakeholders in the development and application of strategies to manage these aquatic resources;
- To broadly communicate the results of research and policy analyses;
- To engage students in all aspects of the River Basin Center's work.

STRATEGY

Our strategy for achieving our mission is to:

- Engage in scientific and policy research leading to innovative tools and proactive strategies;
- Provide accurate, reliable, and timely analysis, synthesis of information, and evaluation of trends;
- Leverage resources and expertise of the Institute of Ecology, the Law School and the University of Georgia at large to meet stakeholder needs;
- Respond to the needs of decision makers and stakeholders by conducting research and preparing publications, workshops, web sites, presentations, and other products;
- Work collaboratively within the University of Georgia and with all levels of government, citizen groups, nongovernmental organizations, schools, and industry and establish partnerships to make effective use of resources;
- Work principally in the Southeast but to undertake strategic national and international projects;
- Disseminate results of research projects and policy analyses in peer-reviewed journals and at regional and national meetings;
- Disseminate results of research and policy analyses to the public via the web and other avenues;
- Conduct service-learning courses that engage students in projects that meet real-world stakeholder needs;
- Provide opportunities for student involvement in projects via research assistantships and internships;
- Teach courses that provide students with the knowledge base and tools to tackle real-world applied conservation and policy problems.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

The River Basin Center:

- Takes a science-based approach to meeting water and related land use challenges;
- Recognizes the importance of a wide range of perspectives and expertise;
- Maintains integrity in its dealings with people inside and outside the organization; and
- Brings the highest scientific and academic standards to each endeavor.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- On-the-ground conservation actions, such as land preserved, as a result of projects conducted by the River Basin Center;
- Adoption and implementation of techniques, tools, and products in the state, nation, and internationally;
- Contributions to scientific understanding of water and related land use resources issues through professional publications and presentations;
- Contributions to development of public policy through draft legislation, white papers and guidance documents.
- Faculty/staff appointments to national, state, and local boards dealing with water issues and land management;
- Creation and effective distribution of tools and information via the web and printed materials as part of public outreach efforts;
- Presentation of results and products to the public, stakeholders and clients;
- Extramural grants received for interdisciplinary research, outreach, and education;
- Well-capitalized endowment;
- Ongoing support for graduate students, post doctoral students, and undergraduates;
- Recruitment and retention of talented faculty and staff;
- Successful relationships with state and national organizations which are involved with water resource utilization and management;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration across appropriate social and natural sciences with other universities, colleges and academic units;

PROJECT AREAS

To fulfill our mission, the River Basin Center will pursue projects that fall into three broad categories:

A. Conservation Ecology of Aquatic Ecosystems

This category covers applied scientific research projects geared toward increasing the understanding of imperiled species and their relationships to their environment. It also covers research to develop improved tools for studying species and their environment. Examples include fish movement studies, spawning studies and development of population estimation techniques.

B. Applied Research on Aquatic System Stressors and Development of Management Tools

This category includes research projects conducted in direct response to a policy or management question and that include both a scientific research and a policy or management component. The Etowah Aquatic HCP is an example of this type of project. Development of novel policies is also covered in this category.

C. Targeted Policy Development and Outreach

Included in this category are projects that are primarily policy outreach in nature, such as the development of appropriate policy solutions adapted to the needs of individual counties and municipalities. These projects do not involve major scientific research or the development of entirely new policies, although they may identify the need for such research and policies. The Upper Altamaha Initiative for Watershed Excellence is an example of this type of project. This category also includes general policy dissemination.

The list of active projects will vary and is found in a separate file.