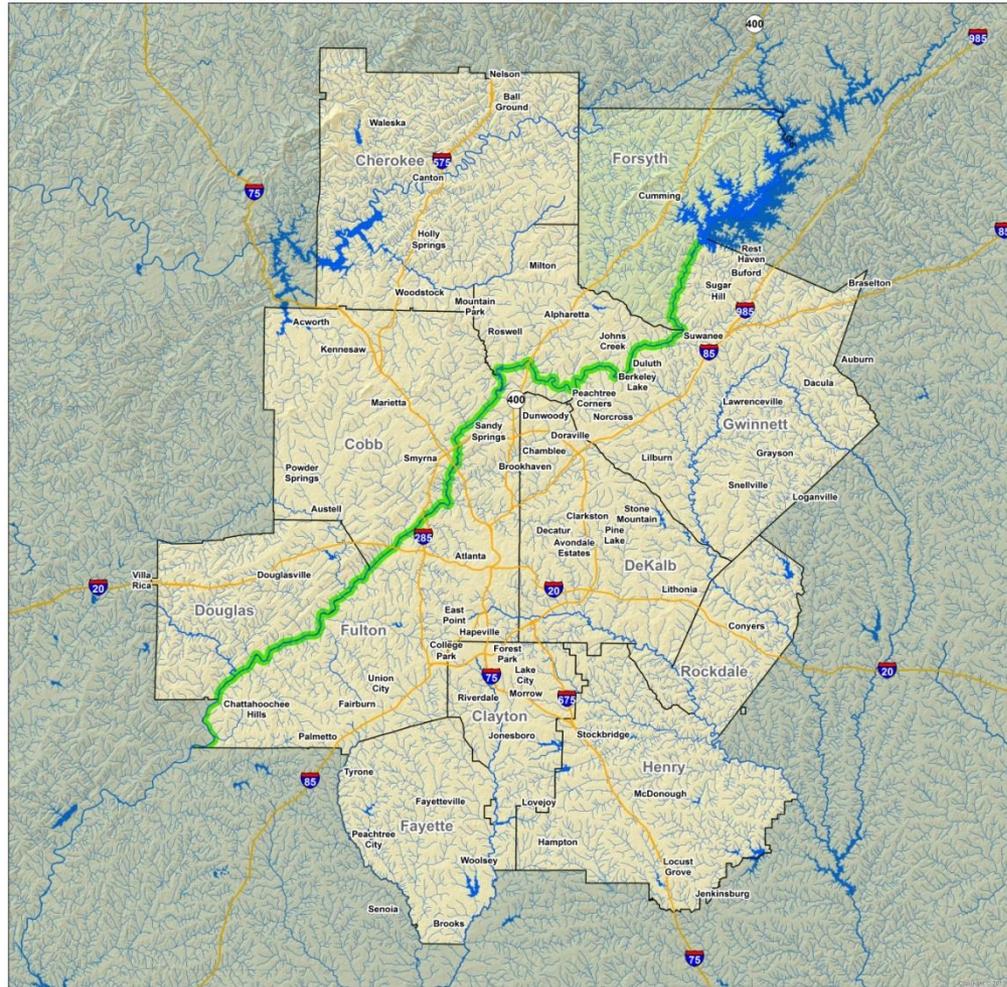


Protecting the Chattahoochee River

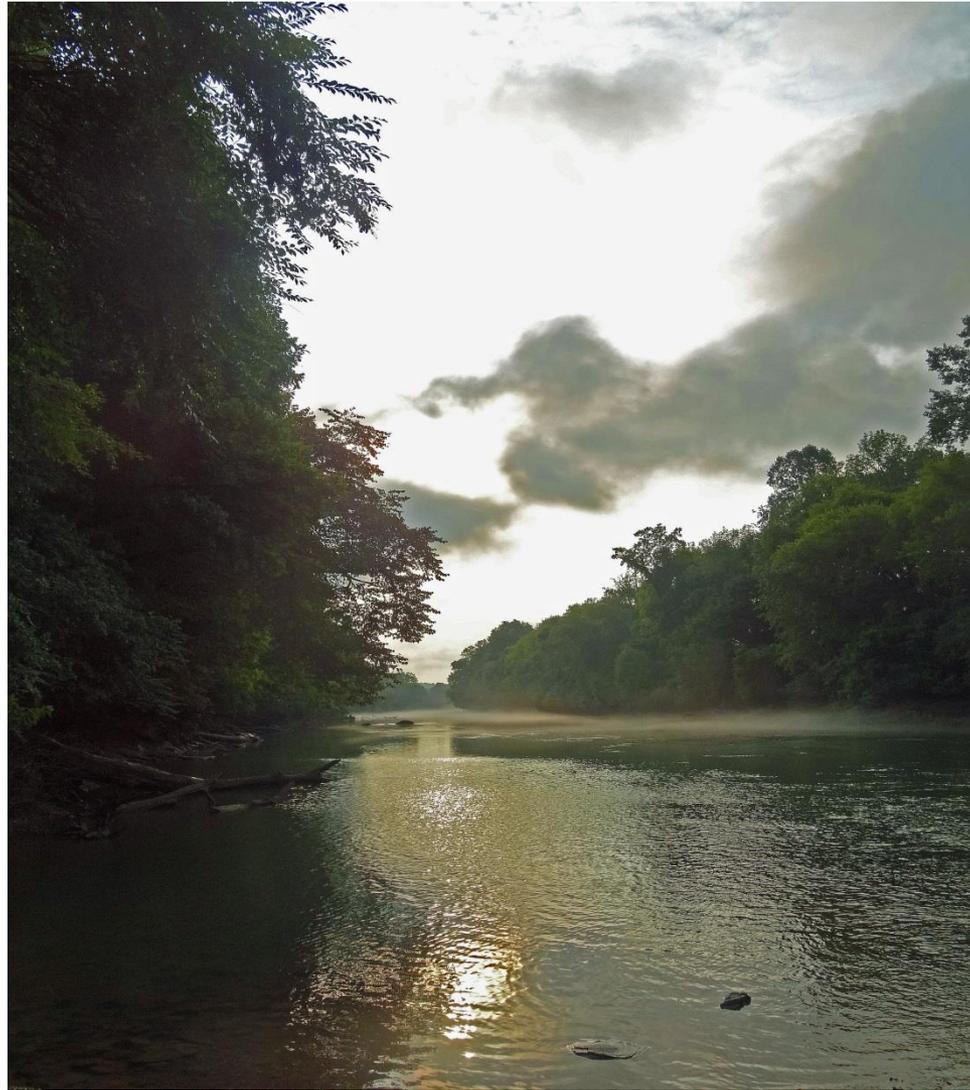
Metropolitan River Protection Act
and
Chattahoochee Corridor Plan

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER CORRIDOR



regional impact + local relevance

Chattahoochee River near Rogers Bridge



Why Protect the Chattahoochee?

- It is the source of more than 50% of the metro area's water supply
- It provides recreation for millions of visitors per year
- It is a major trout fishery

Fishing and Wading at Jones Bridge Park



What are the Issues?

- It is an amenity that has attracted development for decades
- The increasing development and activity stress the river and the surrounding lands
- The natural system becomes overloaded

The River Is Protected Under Natural Conditions

- Vegetation slows runoff
- Soil and vegetation absorb water and any pollutants
- Root systems hold soil and stream banks in place

Clear Water on the Chattahoochee



Natural Conditions on the River



Development Changes the Natural System

- Vegetation is removed and soil is disturbed
- Buildings and paving increases
- Runoff and pollutants increase as a result

These Changes Overload the Natural System

- Increased runoff causes higher and faster storm flows
- Stream bank erosion and sedimentation increase
- Banks collapse and habitat is lost

Erosion and Bank Collapse on a Tributary Stream



Protection Can be Provided by Working with Natural Conditions

- By designing and locating new development to work with the land
 - By minimizing clearing, grading and impervious areas
 - By avoiding sensitive areas
 - By maintaining natural buffers and setbacks along rivers and streams

Undisturbed River Bank Near Medlock Bridge Road



Chattahoochee Corridor Study

- Growth along the river became a concern in the late 1960s and early 1970s
- In 1972 ARC developed a Study of the river and the surrounding lands
 - Studied the river's problems and their causes
 - Developed a plan for protecting the River and its resources
 - Identified possible lands for protection and sites for public access

Proposed Study Protection Measures

- Minimizing land disturbance and impervious surface within new development
- Avoiding sensitive areas
- Maintaining natural buffers and setbacks along rivers and streams

Study Led to Successful Legislation

- Metropolitan River Protection Act
- Adopted in 1973
- Established the Chattahoochee River Corridor

What is the Corridor?

- Corridor extends for 2000 feet on both sides of the Chattahoochee and its impoundments
- Originally extended from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek
- In 1998, Corridor extended to the downstream limits of Fulton and Douglas Counties

What Does the Act Require?

- The Regional Commission must develop, adopt and implement a Corridor Plan
- All proposed land-disturbing activity must be reviewed under the adopted Plan
 - Sets development standards within Corridor
 - Standards must be met for consistency with Plan

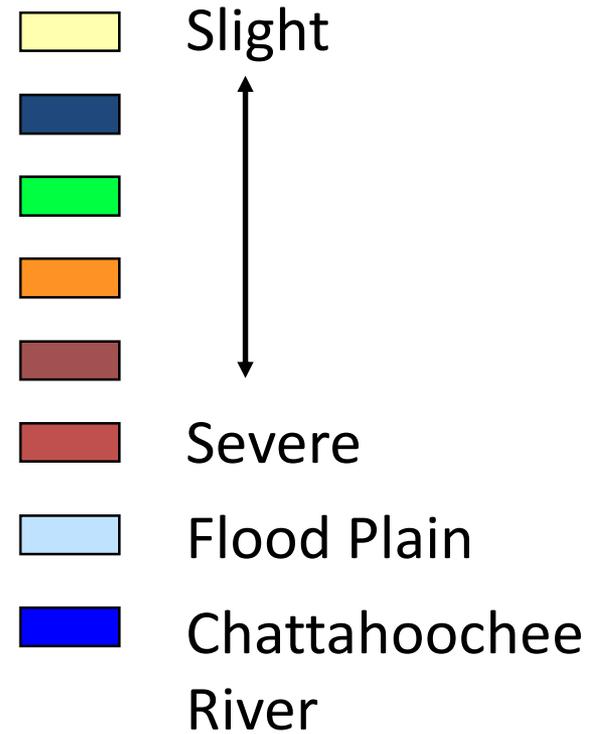
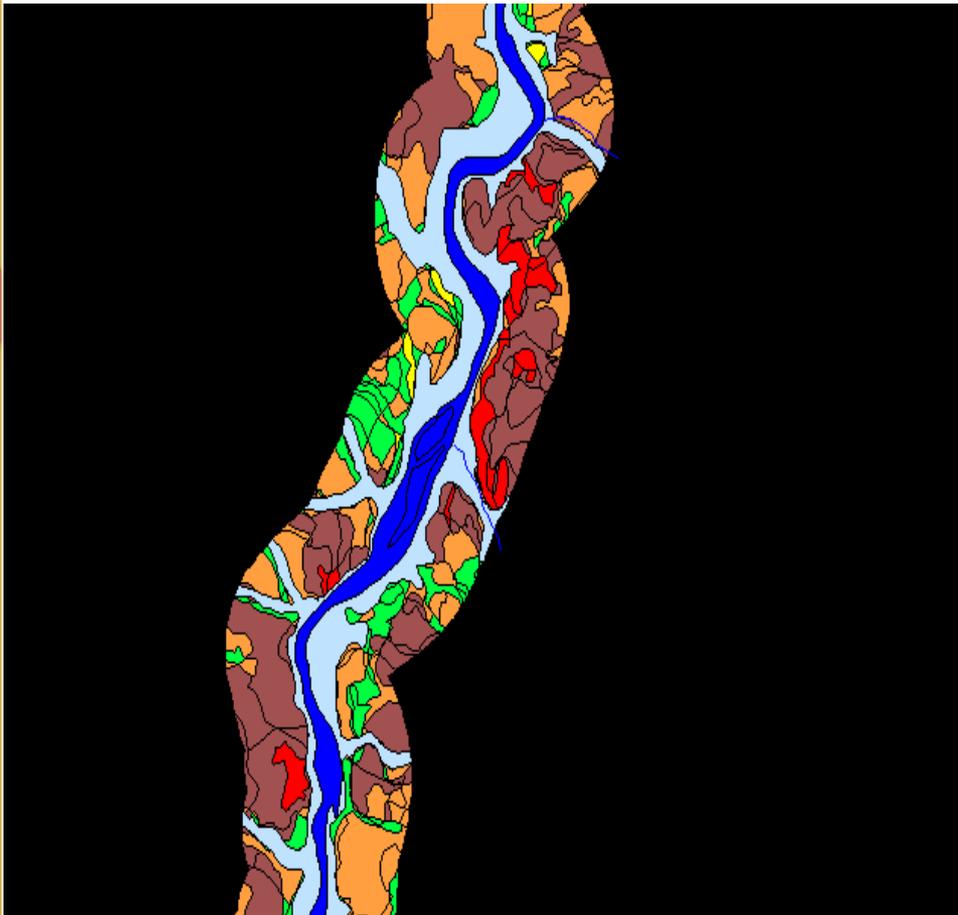
What Are Plan Standards?

- Vulnerability Standards
- Floodplain Standards
- Buffer Zone Standards

Vulnerability Standards

- Land vulnerability is ranked based on natural factors
- Limit land disturbance and impervious surface
 - Land disturbance is any land disturbing activity
 - Impervious surface is any paved, hardened or structural surface

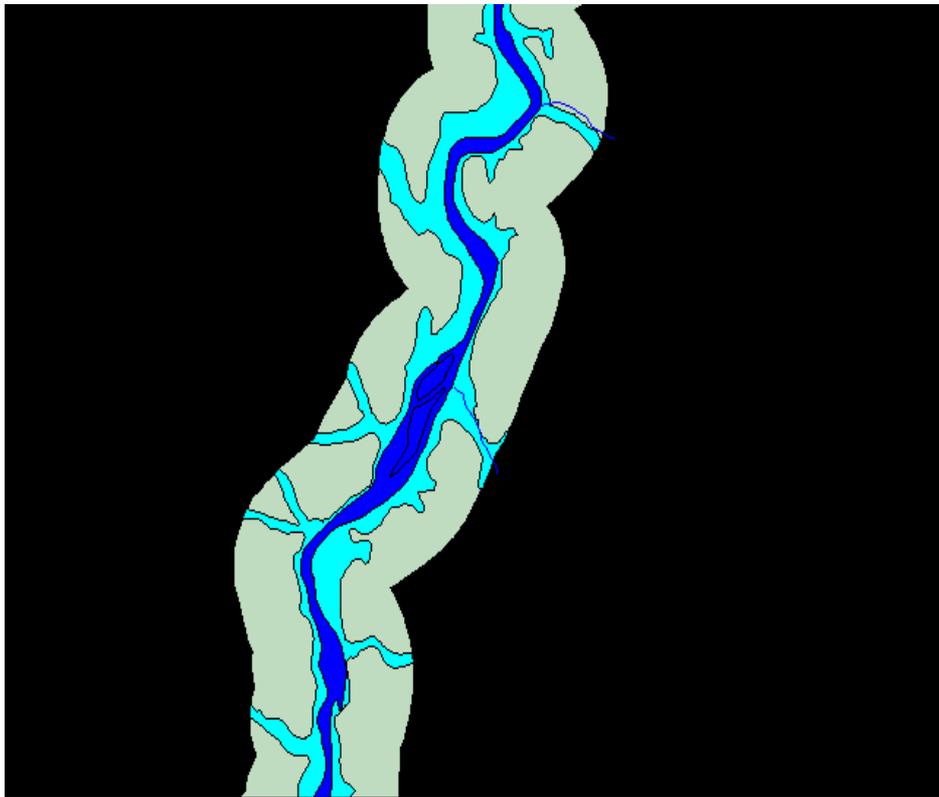
Composite Vulnerability



Flood Plain Standards

- 100-year flood plain:
 - No reduction of flood storage volume
 - Balance cut and fill
 - Don't block flood flow
- 500-year flood plain:
 - 35-foot building height limit

Flood Plains



100-yr Flood Plain



2000 foot Corridor



Chattahoochee
River

Buffer Zone Standards

- 50-foot undisturbed buffer along river
- 150-foot impervious setback along river
- 35-foot undisturbed buffer along tributary streams

Undisturbed Buffer and Setback



All Corridor Development Activity Must Be Reviewed

- Applications must meet all applicable Plan Standards to be consistent with the Plan
- ARC reviews an application and makes a finding based on consistency with Plan Standards
- Local government issues approval based on ARC findings
- As required under the Act

Is Anything Exempt?

- Properly zoned agriculture & animal husbandry outside 50-foot buffer
- Ordinary maintenance outside 50-ft. buffer, except cutting trees over 2 inches diameter
- Projects undertaken or financed by GDOT
- “Grandfathered” projects

What Is “Grandfathered”?

- Projects that were built or underway when Act took effect on the property
- Pre-Act development is treated as consistent
- New activity on such properties must still meet current Plan Standards

Pre-Act Properties

- Act treats pre-existing development as if it was reviewed and consistent
- Changes can be made within existing amounts of impervious surface and land disturbance
- Increases in impervious, disturbance will require review

Older Reviews

- Plan has been amended over the years with last major changes to the review process in 1983
- Included floodplains, upgrading, enforcement
- Must work within original terms or do new review at current standards

After the Review

- Local governments monitor development activity after review
- Compare proposals with approved plans
- Changes to design are possible
- Must remain within approved total limits

In Summary

- Act and Plan have been in place for 42 years
 - Have continued to work as Region has grown and circumstances have changed
 - Have withstood several legal challenges
- Allow for development while protecting the land and water resources of the river
- Have helped to protect our most valuable natural resource and will continue to do so in the future

Sunrise on the River



ARC Contact Info

Jim Santo

- Email: jsanto@atlantaregional.com
- Phone: 404-463-3258