

# GREENSPACE AND WETLANDS MITIGATION: A RECIPE FOR SYNERGISTIC SUCCESS

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**Abstract.** This paper provides a recipe that describes the major steps a local government might take to establish an integrated and synergistic program for both attracting Community Greenspace funds and for meeting wetlands mitigation requirements for public works projects.

## INTRODUCTION

The following recipe describes the major steps involved in establishing an integrated and synergistic program for both attracting Community Greenspace funds (see H. Young paper in these Proceedings) and for meeting wetlands mitigation requirements for public works projects (see R. Rowden paper). The recipe can also be used to meet stream mitigation requirements. Successful completion of the recipe requires careful attention to the sequence of steps described.

The recipe can be followed by any local unit of government that qualifies for Georgia Community Greenspace funds. The results are likely to be even more satisfactory if the recipe is expanded to include multi-county regional partners.

## THE RECIPE

1. Local government reviews proposed public works projects (such as roads, school construction, etc.) that will require Clean Water Act permits from the Corps and estimate the projects' impacts on wetlands.
2. Identify tracts with impaired wetlands and potential wetlands restoration, enhancement and/or creation ("wetlands restoration tracts").
3. Simultaneously, local government reviews the community's needs for community green space.
4. Identify tracts that meet the statutory definition of green space and therefore qualify for acquisition using Community Greenspace Program funds.
5. Estimate opportunities for wetlands preservation and enhancement on the green space tracts identified in step 4 ("wetlands preservation tracts").
6. Select at least one tract identified in step 2 ("wetlands restoration tract") and at least one tract identified in step 4 ("wetlands preservation tract") for synergistic use for both meeting wetlands mitigation requirements and being eligible for Community Greenspace funding. The tracts could be adjacent to each other or separate.
7. Identify sources of funds for acquisition of the tracts. "Wetlands preservation tracts" may be eligible for Community Greenspace funds. Funds for the acquisition of "wetlands restoration tracts" would have to come from sources other than Community Greenspace funds, such as SPLOST funds, the County's general fund or the Georgia Wetlands Trust Fund (see [www.GEPInstitute.com](http://www.GEPInstitute.com) for details on this in lieu fee mitigation option program).
8. Local government submits a proposal to the Corps to create a mitigation bank. The bank would consist of the tracts selected in step 6. One would be used for the permanent preservation of wetlands (the "wetlands preservation tract"). The other would be used for wetlands restoration, enhancement and creation (the "wetlands restoration tract").
9. The bank proposal is approved by both the Corps and an interagency Mitigation Bank Review Team.
10. Local government applies to the Georgia Greenspace Commission for Community Greenspace funds for the acquisition of the "wetlands preservation tract."

11. The Georgia Greenspace Commission awards funds to the local government for the acquisition of the “wetlands preservation tract.” The tract is acquired. The Corps awards credits for the preservation of the tract.
12. Local government restores, enhances and creates wetlands on the “wetlands restoration tract” and earns mitigation credits from the Corps.
13. Local government uses the credits as mitigation for its public works projects. As the credits are used, local government places both a permanent restrictive covenant on the restored tract and, to earn extra mitigation credit, places a conservation easement on the “wetlands restoration tract” with a qualified entity such as a land trust.
14. Both the “wetlands restoration tract” and the “wetlands preservation tract” are added to the community’s inventory of green space, to be used for purposes compatible with the permanent protection of the wetland (e.g., passive recreation) and the Community Greenspace program.