

# **2025 ECHOLS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Robert A. Davis, Chairman**

**Leon Zeigler**

**Glynn Hancock**

**Brenda Stalvey, County Clerk**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**Jackie Carter  
David Corbett  
Gene Culpepper  
Delores Everette  
Lana Foster  
Richard Hendley**

**Mamie Pipkins  
Dr. Rudy Prine  
Carl Rodgers  
Madeline Sanders  
Norman Strickland  
Kenneth Tutt**

**PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH**

**SOUTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
327 West Savannah Avenue  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

**MARCH 2005**

# **2025 ECHOLS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Robert A. Davis, Chairman**

**Leon Zeigler**

**Glynn Hancock**

**Brenda Stalvey, County Clerk**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**Jackie Carter  
David Corbett  
Gene Culpepper  
Delores Everette  
Lana Foster  
Richard Hendley**

**Mamie Pipkins  
Dr. Rudy Prine  
Carl Rodgers  
Madeline Sanders  
Norman Strickland  
Kenneth Tutt**

**PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH**

**SOUTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
327 West Savannah Avenue  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

**MARCH 2005**

# **2025 ECHOLS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Robert A. Davis, Chairman**

**Leon Zeigler**

**Glynn Hancock**

**Brenda Stalvey, County Clerk**

## **ECHOLS COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**Jackie Carter  
David Corbett  
Gene Culpepper  
Delores Everette  
Lana Foster  
Richard Hendley**

**Mamie Pipkins  
Dr. Rudy Prine  
Carl Rodgers  
Madeline Sanders  
Norman Strickland  
Kenneth Tutt**

**PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH**

**SOUTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

**327 West Savannah Avenue  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

**MARCH 2005**

# 2025 ECHOLS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PAGE**

### INTRODUCTION

Planning Process .....	i
Plan Products .....	ii
Public Participation.....	ii

### PART I: INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT: WHERE ARE WE ?

#### CHAPTER ONE: POPULATION

Population Trends.....	1-1
Age Composition .....	1-4
Sex and Race Characteristics .....	1-6
Population and Household Projections .....	1-6
Household and Income Characteristics.....	1-8
Educational Attainment.....	1-11

#### CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Inventory and Assessment of Economic Base .....	2-4
Planned Major Activities.....	2-5
Local Economic Development Resources .....	2-5
Economic Development Goals and Policies.....	2-6

#### CHAPTER THREE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources-Physical Environment .....	3-1
Water Resources .....	3-2
Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Impaired Stream Segments.....	3-4
Soil Types .....	3-11
Prime Agricultural and Forest Land.....	3-13
Plant and Animal Habitat .....	3-19
Major Park, Recreation and Conservation Areas.....	3-20
Natural Resources Goals and Policies.....	3-20
Cultural Resources-Historical Sketch of Echols County.....	3-21
Inventory of Cultural Resource Types .....	3-23
Archaeological Sites .....	3-24
Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	3-25
Cultural Resources Goals and Policies .....	3-26

## CHAPTER FOUR: COUNTY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Introduction.....	4-1
County Governmental Service Buildings.....	4-1
Public Safety .....	4-3
Fire Protection.....	4-3
Health Care .....	4-6
Emergency Medical Services .....	4-6
Public Water System.....	4-7
Sanitary Sewer System .....	4-7
Electric Distribution System.....	4-7
Solid Waste .....	4-9
Transportation - Streets and Roads .....	4-9
Transportation - Railroad Service .....	4-12
Transportation - Aviation .....	4-12
Recreation .....	4-12
Cultural Resources.....	4-13
Educational Facilities .....	4-13

## CHAPTER FIVE: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Characteristics.....	5-1
Types of Housing in Echols County.....	5-5
Housing Value and Condition .....	5-6
Housing Vacancy .....	5-6
Renter/Owner Cost Burden .....	5-7
Housing Goals and Policies.....	5-7

## CHAPTER SIX: EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use – Methodology.....	6-1
Echols County Existing Land Use.....	6-2
Statenville, Mayday, Howell, Haylow, & Tarver Existing Land Use .....	6-5
Development Regulations .....	6-5

## CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Regional Perspective .....	7-1
Coordination Mechanisms With Adjacent Governments.....	7-1
Local Government Authorities.....	7-2
Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	7-2

## PART II: IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES, GOALS AND POLICIES: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE ?

Impacts and Opportunities:	
Cultural Resources.....	II-1
Population and Economy.....	II-1
County Facilities and Services .....	II-2
Housing .....	II-3
Natural Resources .....	II-3
Land Use .....	II-4

Summary ..... II-5  
Goals and Policies..... II-6

**PART III: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN AND SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM:  
HOW DO WE GET THERE ?**

Echols County Future Land Use..... III-1  
Echols County FY 1999-2004 Report of Accomplishments ..... III-4  
Echols County FY 2005 - FY 2009 Short Term Work Program..... III-6

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1-1	Total Population for Echols County - 1960-2000.....	1-1
1-2	Births, Deaths, & Natural Increase in Echols County-1960-1999 .....	1-2
1-3	Echols County Population by Age Groups - 1980-2025 .....	1-5
1-4	Population by Sex for Echols County - 1990-2000 .....	1-6
1-5	Echols County Population by Race and Ethnic Background -1980-2025 .....	1-6
1-6	Population Projections for Echols County, Region and State - 2000-2025 .....	1-7
1-7	Echols County Number of Occupied Households - 1980-2025 .....	1-8
1-8	Persons per Housing Unit in Echols County - 1980-2025.....	1-8
1-9	Average Household and Per Capita Income - 1980-2025 .....	1-9
1-10	Number of Households by Income for Echols County - 2000 .....	1-10
1-11	Educational Attainment for Echols County - 1980-2000 .....	1-11
1-12	Educational Attainment for the South Georgia Region - 1980-2000.....	1-12
1-13	Average High School Achievement Test Scores - 1985-1997.....	1-13
1-14	Average Enrollment & School Dropouts for Echols County/ Georgia 1995-2004 .....	1-13
2-1	Echols County Income By Type- 1990-2000 .....	2-8
2-2	State of Georgia Income By Type - 1990-2000 .....	2-8
2-3	Echols County Employment By Sector - 1980-2025.....	2-9
2-4	State of Georgia Employment by Industry - 1990-2000.....	2-10
2-5	Echols County & Georgia Average Weekly Wages By Sector 1980-2000 .....	2-11
2-6	Unemployment Rates: United States, Georgia, South Ga RDC - 1990-2002 .....	2-12
2-7	1980-2000 Echols County Labor Force By Class of Employment .....	2-12
2-8	Echols County Labor Force By Place of Work 1980-2000 .....	2-13
2-9	Echols County Labor Force Participation 1980-2000 .....	2-13
2-10	Georgia Labor Force Participation 1980-2000 .....	2-14
2-11	United States Labor Force Participation - 1980-2000 .....	2-15
2-12	Echols County Occupation of Residents 1980-2000 .....	2-16
2-13	Georgia Occupation of Residents 1980-2000 .....	2-16
2-14	United States Occupation of Residents 1980-2000 .....	2-17
2-15	General Economic Indicators (master economic rank, taxable sales & income) .....	2-31
3-1	Echols County Average Daily Water Consumption.....	3-4
3-2	Stream Segments with TMDL Implementation Plans.....	3-9
3-3	Summarized Land Capability for Echols County .....	3-16
3-4	Summarized Land Capability for Septic Tanks.....	3-18
3-5	Endangered or Threatened Plant and Animal Species .....	3-19
4-1	Echols County Fire Protection Districts, Equipment, Volunteers, Ownership and ISO Rating.....	4-4
4-2	1994 Electric Supply By Company and Class .....	4-7
4-3	Echols County Recreation Facilities Standards .....	4-12
4-4	Echols County Recreation Acreage Deficiency Analysis .....	4-13
5-1	State of Georgia Housing Characteristics 1980-2000.....	5-1
5-2	Echols County Housing Characteristics 1980-2000 .....	5-2
5-3	Persons Per Housing Unit in Echols County 1980-2025 .....	5-2
5-4	1980-2025 Echols County Number of Occupied Households .....	5-3
5-5	Renter/Owner Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income-1980.....	5-4
5-6	Renter/Owner Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income-1990.....	5-4
5-7	Renter/Owner Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income-2000.....	5-7
6-1	Echols County Existing Land Use Acreage .....	6-3

## LIST OF MAPS

<b>MAP</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
3-1	Echols County Drainage Basins.....	3-3
3-2	Echols County Groundwater Recharge Areas .....	3-5
3-3	Echols County Wetlands .....	3-7
3-4	Echols County Protected River Corridors.....	3-8
3-5	Echols County 2002 Impaired Stream Segments .....	3-10
3-6	Echols County Generalized Soil Associations.....	3-12
3-7	Echols County Land Capability-Agriculture .....	3-14
3-8	Echols County Land Capability-Urban.....	3-15
3-9	Echols County Land Capability-Septic Tanks .....	3-17
3-10	Echols County Historic Resources.....	3-27
3-11	Statenville Area Historic Resources.....	3-28
3-12	Howell Area Historic Resources .....	3-29
4-1	Echols County Facilities & Services .....	4-2
4-2	Echols County Fire Protection Districts.....	4-5
4-3	Statenville Water Distribution System.....	4-8
4-4	Echols County Street and Road Classifications.....	4-10
4-5	Echols County Traffic Volumes.....	4-11
6-1	Echols County Existing Land Use.....	6-6
III-1	Echols County Future Land Use.....	III-8



# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan is to provide elected and advisory officials with a tool to manage and guide future growth and development of the county through the year 2025. The Plan represents a coordinated planning process as set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. By meeting the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established as part of the legislation, the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan establishes a planning process for the provision of public facilities and services. In addition, the comprehensive plan will serve as the basis for local government decision-making regarding the future land use pattern, environmental protection, and economic development.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan was prepared using the basic planning process required by Georgia's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. This process is summarized below:

### PART I - WHERE ARE WE?

**Inventory and Assessment:** Background information on such factors as population, economic development, natural and historic resources, community facilities and services, housing and land use was collected and analyzed. An assessment of these factors was conducted to determine their adequacy in light of projected population changes and anticipated future development patterns.

### PART II - WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

**Statement of Impacts and Opportunities, Goals and Policies:** Based upon the inventory and assessment, problems and needs were identified. Goals and policies were developed to meet identified needs and to document the future aspirations of the county. The Plan's goal statements are consistent with, and supportive of, the statewide planning goals as set forth in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. These statewide goals are:

- (a) **Economic Development:** To achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the resources of this state and its various regions, that equitably benefits all sections of the state and all segments of the population.
- (b) **Natural and Historic Resources:** To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and historic resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.
- (c) **Community Facilities & Services:** To ensure that public infrastructure facilities serving local governments, the region and the state have the capacity and are in place when needed to support and attract growth and development and/or maintain and enhance the quality of life of the residents of the state.
- (d) **Housing:** To ensure that all people within the state and its various regions and communities have access to adequate and affordable housing.
- (e) **Land Use:** To ensure that the land resources of the state are allocated for uses required to promote and sustain growth and economic development; to conserve and protect the natural, environmental and historic resources of the state; and to protect and promote the quality of life of the people of Georgia's communities, regions, and the state.

### **PART III - HOW DO WE GET THERE?**

**Implementation:** Based upon the Impacts and Opportunities / Goals and Policies (found in Part II) of the Plan, a strategy to put the plan into action is prepared. Part III of the Plan includes a Five-Year Short-Term Work Program, which outlines projects, and programs, which need to be undertaken and/or completed by the year 2009 to meet existing needs and achieve future goals, and Future Land Use Plan for Echols County.

### **PLAN PRODUCTS**

As stated previously, the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan was prepared following the guidelines in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. This Plan provides an inventory and assessment of existing conditions of the county, and an implementation strategy consisting of impacts and opportunities, goal and policy statements, and a Five-Year Short-Term Work Program, and a future land use plan for Echols County.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, a public hearing was held on February 17, 2005, prior to the preparation of the Plan. A second public hearing was conducted to receive input on the proposed updated **2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan** on March 28, 2005.

## CHAPTER ONE: POPULATION

### POPULATION TRENDS

An understanding of Echols County in terms of past, present and future trends, characteristics and distribution throughout the county, provides insights about needs for utilities, schools, housing, police and fire protection, emergency medical services, recreation and other services and facilities.

Between 1960 and 2000, Echols County gained 1,878 persons, a 100.1 percent increase in total population. During this same 40-year period, the South Georgia Region gained 51.4 percent and the State of Georgia gained 108.7 percent in population. Echols County exhibited small numerical gains in the 1960 to 1970 decade, a major gain between 1970 -1980 and 1990 - 2000. Table 1-1 shows these numerical and percentage changes and Table 1-2 shows the births, deaths, and resulting natural increase (births minus deaths), and the components that fostered total population changes. There are no census numbers to indicate the distribution of population, but Statenville (an unincorporated community) which is the county seat has maintained the most persons and households within Echols County for the past forty years. Overall, Echols County has grown as a bedroom county and remained relatively stable by having 1.7 percent of the nine county South Georgia region's population during the last forty years.

**TABLE 1-1  
1960 - 2000 TOTAL POPULATION FOR ECHOLS COUNTY**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Echols County	1,876	1,924	2,297	2,319	3,754
RDC	150,165	157,500	186,200	195,717	227,421
State	3,943,116	4,611,479	5,484,527	6,522,645	8,229,820

#### Numerical and Percentage Change

	1960 - 1970		1970 - 1980		1980 - 1990		1990 - 2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Echols County	48	2.6	373	19.4	37	1.6	458	24.4
RDC	7,335	4.9	28,700	18.2	9,248	5.0	31,704	16.2
State	668,363	17.0	873,048	18.9	1,038,118	18.9	1,707,175	26.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 - 2000.

## CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The primary purpose of the economic element is to gain some perspective of the existing and future potential of the Echols County economic base. The economic base can provide the stimulus for population growth, improve the overall quality of life and allow residents to raise families and retire in Echols County. The economic element directly impacts all other elements of the comprehensive plan, especially goals and policies, future land use plans, and the five-year short-term work programs.

Echols County's economic history has relied upon the agricultural/forestry sectors to be its mainstay through the 1980's with some minor gains and losses in the manufacturing sector thereafter. The work force, in the last thirty years has become very mobile with those workers working outside Echols County rising from 51 to 85 percent of the work force. Echols County and the vast majority of the work force reside adjacent to a large urban growth center, namely Valdosta/Lowndes County, which provides a wide range of employment opportunities and has an extensive trade area. The major employers of today, with the exception of the State and Local Government sector, are located outside Echols County. Rural farm and non-farm populations have cycled upward and downward in the decades where agricultural/forestry employment yielded to higher paying jobs outside Echols County. Consequently, small settlements have prospered and faded to bedroom "communities". Echols County has evolved into a bedroom county. As of March, 2002, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce "County Business Patterns – 2001-2002" publication, there were 56 employees at 15 establishments in the following economic sectors - agricultural services, retail, construction, services, manufacturing, real estate, health care and social services and utilities in Echols County.

To comprehend past economic trends and future expectations Tables 2-1 through 2-15 (found at the end of this chapter), have been prepared for the following subjects: type of income, employment by industry, average weekly wages, unemployment, labor force characteristics and participation rates, occupations, and general economic indicators. In most instances the county data and trends are compared to state and national trends.

### Income By Type

The sources of personal income by type for Echols County are identified and compared to the state and the nation in Tables 2-17, 2-18, and 2-19. It may not be clear what the data for personal income by type means, so the following definitions seek to explain the terminology:

- **Wage and Salary** - measures total income earned as compensation for working rendering services.
- **Other Labor Income** - measures total employer contributions to private pension or worker's compensation funds.
- **Self Employment Income** - measures total profits earned from partnerships and proprietorships.
- **Dividend, Investment, Rent and Interest Income** - measures the total income from investments and rental property.

- **Transfer Payments** - measures total income from payments by the government under many different programs, including Social Security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, veterans benefits, etc.

Tables 2-1 through 2-2 show the ways Echols County differs from the state in the "income by type". The percentages clearly portray the agricultural/forestry based economy, with nearly equal percentage numbers of "wage and salary" incomes and higher than state percentages in the "self employment" income. There are increases in earnings in the wage and salary category between 1990 and 2000, but disproportionately to the increase of self-employment income. In all years transfer payments have been higher than the state and these tend to increase during high levels of unemployment.

### **Economic Sectors**

Table 2-3 exhibit past and future employment and earnings for thirteen economic sectors, namely Farming, Agricultural Services, Mining; Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Financial, Insurance, & Real Estate; Services; Federal Government-Civilian; Federal Government-Military; and State and Local Government. Data comparisons for 1990 and 2000 are made with the State of Georgia. The employment figures represent jobs located in Echols County regardless of the residence of the jobholder. Likewise, Echols County residents who work in other counties are not included in the totals for the Echols County tables.

Echols County, between 1980 and 2000 experienced a 56.7 percent increase (+ 249 jobs) in employment (from 439 to 688). This majority of jobs that increased are in two sectors: Agricultural Services (194 jobs) and State and Local Government (55 jobs). In the state the top three employment sectors in 2000 are Educational, Health and Social Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.

The twenty-five year projected outlook for Echols County shows a net increase of 166 jobs. Ninety-one percent of the increase will be in four categories: Agricultural Services (35), State and Local Government (69), Services (27); and Retail Trade (20). By 2025 Manufacturing will drop from 13.7 percent to 6.1 percent of the total employment base. The projections for Echols County are similar to the state and the nation. The state and the nation show continual growth in retail, wholesale, and service sectors and a slight drop in the manufacturing sector.

### **Average Weekly Wages**

Table 2-5 shows the 1980 - 2000 average weekly wage for Echols County and the State of Georgia. During this twenty-year period weekly wages for "all industries" increased 68 percent in Echols County and 184 percent for the state. To top it off Echols County's average weekly wage in 2000 was just 38 percent of the state average weekly wage, so comparisons are impossible. It is a case of the rural wage rates not keeping pace with urban/metropolitan wage structure.

### **Unemployment Rates**

Between 1990 and 2002 Echols County's unemployment rate in a majority of these years was lower than the United States and Georgia. (See Table 2-6). Echols County averages a 4.37 percent unemployment rate and this is second lowest of the nine-county South Georgia region.

### **Labor Force Characteristics**

In Table 2-7 the percentage and number of private wage and salary workers, government workers, and self-employed workers has increased between 1980 and 2000. Unpaid family workers have declined to zero in 2000. The growth was a result of expansions in the regional economy and this allowed the private wage and salary workers to seek positions outside Echols County. Private wage and salary workers increased by

368 persons or 60.9 percent, while Government workers increased by 76 or 55.9 percent between 1980 and 2000.

The residents commuting to work outside the county has risen from 51 percent to 85 percent of the work force between 1970 and 2000. Echols County has upwards of ninety percent of land area devoted to the production of commercial forests and has neither the resources nor the desire to provide the necessary infrastructure to support new industries and major commercial enterprises. The desire to live in Echols County and work elsewhere has been supported by the leaders and the general public in Echols County. In 2000, 15 percent of the workforce were residents working in Echols County. The majority 85 percent (1,431) of the residents of Echols County work outside the county at the following locations:

<u>Work Destinations</u>	<u>Number of Workers</u>	<u>% of Total Working Outside Echols</u>
Lowndes County	1,203	84.1
Hamilton County, FL	82	5.7
Madison County, FL	10	0.7
Clinch County	35	2.4
Lanier County	30	2.1
Thomas County	13	0.9
Tift County	8	0.6
Elsewhere	39	2.7

Tables 2-9, 2-10, and 2-11 show the rate of labor force participation in various categories for the total labor force, male and female labor force, all broken down for Echols County, the state and the nation. Echols County "in labor force, males and females" categories were lower than the state and the nation in 1980, 1990 and 2000. The Echols County female participation rate rose from 38.7 percent in 1980, 52.4 percent in 1990, to 56.2 percent in 2000. The male participation rate in Echols County rose slightly from 70.2 percent to 71.1 percent between 1980 and 2000. On the whole the Echols County female work force seem to experience less unemployment than the male gender in the county, state and nation. This says something about the industrial strength, job skills and employment stability in boom and recessionary years.

Tables 2-12, 2-13, and 2-14 provide a very broad view of the work-related skills and backgrounds of Echols County residents, the State of Georgia and the nation. The work skill categories of "professional and technical specialty and clerical & administrative support" hold the most persons in the state and the nation. Echols County's top four occupational categories in 2000 were "Equipment operation, assembly, inspection; Sales; Farming, Fishing and Forestry; and Clerical and Administrative support. Back twenty years ago the top four occupational categories were Equipment operation, Assembly and Inspection; Farming, Fishing, and Forestry; Precision Production, Craft and Repair; and Clerical and Administrative Support.

### **Comparative Economic Indicators**

The statewide master economic rank compares all 159 counties in Georgia (See Table 2-15). It is a measure of economic health based on personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags, and assessed property value. Table 2-15 shows how Echols County compares statewide and to eight neighboring counties. Echols County's Master Economic Rank has ranged from a high of 158 in 1979 to a low of 153 in 1999. (1 is the highest and 159 is the lowest) Of the eight counties, Echols County has ranked eighth for the last twenty years. But to the County's credit their statewide rank has improved each year. "Total taxable sales" in Echols County rose 123.9% between 1979 and 1990. Irwin, Brooks and Berrien counties had 48%, 52% and 63% respective increases and the other four counties ranged from 82% to 109% taxable sales increases between 1979-1990. The percentage increase for taxable sales statewide was 76%, so Echols County is in better condition than a few counties and worse off than other counties. (These numbers are not in "constant dollars", but if they were the Echols County increase between 1979 and 1990 would evaporate.)

Per capita income as a percent of State and USA per capita incomes are also shown in Table 2-15. Echols County's per capita income compared more favorably with the state and nation in 1985 and 1989, but slid backwards in 1999 due in part to seasonal farm labor

The Retail Pull Factor reported in the Georgia County Guide, 2001 is a measurement of a county's retail buying power that incorporates the effects of income and population on a county's retail sales activity. A high pull factor > 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing into the county, and a low pull factor < 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing out of the county. The following show the adjacent counties pull factors:

	<b>Pull Factor</b>
Echols	0.03
Clinch	0.60
Atkinson	0.47
Lanier	0.49
Lowndes	1.74

### **Inventory and Assessment of Economic Base**

**Farming and Agricultural Services** - The farming/agricultural services sector in the 1980's employed 30 percent of the work force and by 2000 it constituted 42 percent of the work force. By 2025 this sector will account for 37 percent of the work force. Farming and Agricultural Services by 2025, will continue to play a stabilizing role in Echols County's economic base.

**Mining** - The tabular summaries show mining employment was non-existent, because numbers were not available. However, the actual mining employment base was 20 employees. Sand mining will continue throughout the planning period.

**Construction** - Construction employment rose and fell throughout the 1980-2000 era with 0.6 percent of the total in 1970, 0.8 percent in 1990, and 1.5 percent in 2000. Between 2000 and 2025 employment will rise slightly to 2.1 percent of the work force.

**Manufacturing** - This was the most devastated sector in Echols County with employment decreasing from 19.5 percent to 9.0 percent between 1980 and 1990. By 2000, manufacturing represented 7.6 percent of the in county work force. Employment projections to 2025 show it will continue to decline to 6.1 percent of the in county work force.

**Transportation, Communications, & Public Utilities** - This sector provides 2.5 percent of the employment. The twenty-five year forecast shows 2.8 percent in employment. This means that employment will increase slightly to the year 2025.

**Wholesale Trade** - The wholesale trade sector did not appear until 1985. Its relative share of employment will drop from 3.3 percent for employment in 2000 to 2.8 percent by 2025.

**Retail Trade** - The retail trade sector has "roller-coasted" in employment and earnings from 1980 to 2000. The numerical level of employment will increase and have 5.6 percent of the work force by 2025.

**Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate** - This sector came into being in 1985 and plays a minor role in total employment. Total employment will rise slightly from 3.1 percent in 2000 to 3.3 percent by 2025.

**Services** - The services sector increased in employment and earnings from 1970 to 1985, and fell drastically by 1990. This sector includes motels, restaurants, business services, automotive repair, amusement and recreation businesses, health, legal, and social services. This service sector has peaked and will level off at 10.4% of employment by 2025.

**State and Local Government** - This sector includes teachers, hospital and nursing home employees, county and state employees, and public and safety personnel. The employment share ranged from 27.1 percent in 1980 to 25.3 percent in 2000, and is projected to be 28.5 percent by 2025.

**Special or Unique Economic Sectors** - Echols County "self employment income" in actual dollars rose by 677 percent between 1990 and 2000. This constituted a 13.5 percent increase (from 7.8 percent to 21.3 percent) in the income by type totals. Government transfer payments including: Federal old age, survivors, disability, and hospital insurance; supplementary medical insurance; state unemployment insurance; railroad retirement and unemployment insurance; government retirement; federal and state government insured workers compensation; veterans benefits; food stamps; black lung payments; supplemental security income; and direct relief decreased from 11.2 percent of income by type to 9.9 percent in 2000. (See Table 2-1.)

Perhaps the most positive indication of decrease of transfer income is that a high proportion of a county's potential labor force is now productive. This usually means an increase in potential taxpayers and an improved ability to support needed community services and improvements.

### **Planned Major Economic Activities**

Echols County has preliminary plans to locate new industries and purchase industrial park land and seek assistance to get the industrial park serviced with water and sanitary sewer services.

### **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**

Since 1999, Echols County has partnered with Berrien, Lanier and Lowndes Counties in a joint economic development authority that fosters area-wide economic development projects. By 2005, Echols County had used a Learn and Serve grant to request a Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment from Georgia Tech-Economic Development Institute that recommended five major priorities: (1) formalize an economic development group; (2) review the local government structure to see if it meets local needs; (3) investigate revenue enhancement efforts; (4) improve communications via a community Web site, current school-based newsletter, The Valdosta Daily Times; and (5) educate the public on the importance of economic development. Interested citizens have formed the Economic Development Group Echols and have established their vision, mission, By-Laws, and selected officers. The Echols County Commission in 2004 allocated \$20,000 to pay for a part-time economic developer.

### **Educational and Training Opportunities**

The Valdosta Technical Institute has offered a wide range of educational programs ranging from adult basic education to highly technical occupational skills. This school has the capacity to retrain those persons displaced by automotive and technological changes, and training personnel for new job skills in partnership with existing industry needs. There is a four-year college in Valdosta that offers courses and degrees readily applicable to local businesses and industries.

### **RDC Economic Development Tools and Programs**

The South Georgia Regional Development Center has facilities located at 327 West Savannah Avenue, 116 McKey Street, and 901 North Toombs Street, Valdosta, Georgia. Facilities on Savannah Avenue consist of three structures with a combined floor area of 8,025 square feet. Facilities on McKey Street consist of approximately 3,600 square feet and those on Toombs Street occupy 3,260 square feet.

Housed at the Regional Development Center on Savannah Avenue are office spaces for programs including Economic Development, Local and Regional Planning, Community Development Programs, Administration, Geographic Information Systems, graphics and conference space for administrative needs.



Activities on McKey Street include data processing for 26 cities and nine counties, and administration of the data processing systems. Activities at the Toombs Street location include the Job Training Partnership Program administration and intake center offices.

Specific programs and financing mechanisms for industrial development and business financing handled by the South Georgia Regional Development Center include: Economic Development Administration-Revolving Program; Small Business Administration-7A & 504 Loan Programs; Rural Development Administration-Intermediary Re-lending Program, Rural Business Enterprise, & Business and Industry Loan Program; and Georgia Department of Community Affairs-Employment Incentive Program.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

### **GOAL**

**Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.**

### **POLICIES**

- Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance.
- Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged through the creation of the Echols County Industrial Development Authority and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments.
- Echols County should actively pursue the development of a public industrial park and the provision of a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the Statenville area.
- Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.
- Diversification of the economic base should be fostered and maintained. The development of recreational, educational and health care facilities and services should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and support industrial development.

### **GOAL**

**Encourage economic development through business/industry recruitment and/or expansions that capitalize on and are compatible with the natural attributes of Echols County.**

### **POLICIES**

- Economic developments should be compatible with environmental standards.
- In cases where development is incompatible with the environment, such developments should be located where environmental and social costs are minimized.

#### **GOAL**

**Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.
- Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.
- Programs should be developed which encourage local college and technical school graduates to seek employment within the county.
- Industries, both existing and new, should initiate on-the-job training programs for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

#### **GOALS**

**Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing economic development and to encourage future economic growth.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Industrial growth and expansions should be located within or adjacent to industrial parks and sites that can be readily served by public utilities.
- The development of cultural, historic and educational services and facilities should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and foster economic and industrial development.

**TABLE 2-1**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY INCOME BY TYPE**  
**(thousands of dollars)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	20,612,342		58,374,600	
Wage & Salary	15,511,191	75.3%	37,264,100	63.8%
Other Labor	595,337	2.9%	1,177,100	2.0%
Self Employment Income	1,597,506	7.8%	12,405,900	21.3%
Interest, dividends, or rent Income	490,506	2.4%	1,755,500	3.0%
Social Security Income	1,356,498	6.6%	3,875,400	6.6%
Public Assistance Income	300,498	1.5%	406,700	0.7%
Retirement Income	760,803	3.7%	1,489,400	2.6

Source: U. S. Census, Summary File 3, 2000.

**TABLE 2-2**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA INCOME BY TYPE**  
**(millions of dollars)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	87,114		170,272	
Wage & Salary	68,394	78.5%	133,221	78.2%
Other Labor	980	1.1%	2,898	1.7%
Self Employment Income	5,450	6.3%	9,529	5.6%
Interest, Dividends or Rent Income	4,898	5.6%	8,973	5.3%
Social Security Income	3,776	4.3%	6,882	4.0%
Public Assistance Income	625	0.7%	.375	0.2%
Retirement Income	2,990	3.4%	7,776	4.6%

Source: U. S. Census, Summary File 3, 2000.

**TABLE 2-3**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR**  
**(Number and percent of Jobs)**

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	439		494		509		594		688	
Farming	131	29.8	121	24.4	134	26.3	114	19.2	94	13.7
Agriculture Services	1	.2	22	4.4	41	8.1	118	19.9	195	28.3
Mining	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Construction	4	.9	7	1.4	4	0.8	6	1.0	10	1.5
Manufacturing	86	19.5	38	7.6	46	9.0	50	8.4	52	7.6
Transp. Comm. Util.	11	2.5	13	2.6	17	3.3	17	2.9	17	2.5
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0	12	2.4	12	2.4	15	2.5	23	3.3
Retail Trade	19	4.6	25	5.0	64	12.6	46	7.7	28	4.1
Finance., Ins., Real Est	0	0.0	7	1.4	6	1.2	13	2.2	21	3.1
Services	57	12.9	127	25.7	42	8.3	52	8.8	62	9.0
Federal Govt - Civilian	6	1.3	2	.4	3	0.6	2	0.3	2	0.3
Federal Govt - Military	5	1.1	12	2.4	11	2.2	10	1.7	10	1.5
State and Local Govt	119	27.1	108	21.8	129	25.3	151	25.4	174	25.3
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	733		766		795		825		854	
Farming	86	11.7	79	10.3	74	9.3	70	8.5	66	7.7
Agriculture Services	204	27.8	214	27.9	225	28.3	237	28.7	250	29.3
Mining	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Construction	13	1.8	15	2.0	16	2.0	17	2.1	18	2.1
Manufacturing	52	7.1	51	6.7	51	6.4	51	6.2	52	6.1
Transp. Comm. Util.	18	2.5	20	2.6	21	2.6	23	2.8	24	1.8
Wholesale Trade	23	3.1	23	3.0	24	3.0	24	2.9	24	2.8
Retail Trade	37	5.0	42	5.5	45	5.7	47	5.7	48	5.6
Finance., Ins., Real Est	22	3.0	24	3.1	25	3.1	26	3.2	28	3.3
Services	78	10.6	85	11.1	87	10.9	89	10.8	89	10.4
Federal Govt – Civilian	2	0.3	2	0.3	2	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2
Federal Govt – Military	10	1.4	10	1.3	10	1.3	10	1.2	10	1.2
State and Local Govt	188	25.6	201	26.2	215	27.0	229	27.8	243	28.5

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. 2002. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

**TABLE 2-4**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**(number and percent of jobs)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	3,090,276		3,839,756	
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	82,537	2.7	53,201	1.4
Construction	214,359	6.9	304,710	7.9
Manufacturing	585,423	18.9	568,830	14.8
Wholesale Trade	156,838	5.1	148,026	3.9
Retail Trade	508,861	16.5	459,548	12.0
Transp. Comm. Util.	263,419	8.5	231,304	6.0
Information	NA	-	135,496	3.5
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	201,422	6.5	251,240	6.5
Professional, Scientific, Adm., manage., services	151,096	4.9	362,414	9.4
Educational, Health, Social Services	461,307	14.9	675,593	17.6
Arts, Entertainment., Accomm., Food Services	31,911	1.0	274,437	7.1
Other Services	266,053	8.6	181,829	4.7
Public Administration	167,050	5.4	193,128	5.0

Source: U. S. Census Summary File 3, 2000.

**TABLE 2-5**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY SECTOR**  
**(actual dollars)**

	Echols County			State		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
All Industries	158	264	266	248	425	704
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	NR	150	253	179	276	421
Mining	NR	NR	D	323	589	952
Construction	NR	NR	D	264	434	710
Manufacture of Durable Goods	216	471	D	261	449	761
Transp., Communications, Public Utilities	D	280	D	372	603	838
Wholesale	NR	D	D	337	603	1,032
Retail	D	216	D	164	236	454
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	NR	NR	D	274	543	1,117
Services	NR	D	306	214	414	482
Federal Government	333	291	D		534	D
State Government	D	357	468	287	386	681
Local Government	D	D	D		450	D
Miscellaneous, Not elsewhere identified	NR	NR		202	341	483

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, various years.

"D" = the source has data but that data cannot be disclosed.

"NR" = no data was reported by the data source.

**TABLE 2-6**  
**1990 - 2002 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**  
**UNITED STATES, GEORGIA AND SOUTH GEORGIA RDC COUNTIES**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Nation	5.6%	6.8%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	5.40%	5.70%
Georgia	5.5%	5.0%	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	4.00%	5.10%
South GA	5.8%	4.8%	6.7%	6.3%	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	5.1%	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%	4.60%	4.30%
Ben Hill	6.4%	5.5%	7%	7.3%	6.2%	5.2%	6.4%	6.8%	6.1%	6.4%	6.2%	5.60%	5.90%
Brooks	3.8%	3.3%	4.9%	4.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	5.3%	6.0%	4.5%	5.7%	5.10%	4.80%
Cook	6.5%	7.1%	7.5%	6.9%	4.9%	3.6%	3.9%	5.2%	4.8%	5.0%	5.1%	5.00%	4.30%
<b>Echols</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>3.70%</b>	<b>2.90%</b>
Irwin	5.9%	4.7%	5.9%	6.0%	4.8%	4.5%	4.9%	5.7%	5.3%	4.7%	5.7%	5.60%	5.50%
Lanier	4.8%	4.1%	5.6%	5.3%	3.7%	4.0%	5.3%	3.5%	2.9%	4.1%	5.7%	3.90%	3.80%
Lowndes	4.8%	3.9%	6.2%	5.4%	4.4%	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.0%	4.4%	5.6%	3.70%	3.50%
Tift	7.4%	5.6%	7.5%	7.4%	6.0%	5.8%	5.5%	5.7%	5.6%	4.9%	4.6%	4.40%	3.90%
Turner	7.9%	5.3%	8.8%	7.5%	6.6%	7.2%	7.3%	11.1%	12.1%	10.1%	8.8%	8.50%	8.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & Georgia Department of Labor. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

**TABLE 2-7**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT**  
**(number and percent of persons)**

	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total Employed	822		983		1,273	
Private Wage or Salary Workers	604	73.5	753	76.6	972	76.4
Government Workers	136	16.5	156	15.9	212	16.7
Self-Employed Workers	80	9.7	62	6.3	89	7.0
Unpaid Family Workers	2	.3	12	1.2	0	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-8**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK**  
**(number and percent of persons)**

	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Residents Working Inside County	246	34.3%	156	16.0%	252	15.0%
Residents Working Outside County	472	65.7%	821	84.0%	1,431	85.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

**TABLE 2-9**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

Total Labor Force 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	860	53.6	1,034	60.1	1,755	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	860	53.6	1,025	59.6	1,748	63.7
Employed	822	51.2	983	57.2	1,683	61.3
Unemployed	38	2.4	42	2.4	65	2.4
Armed Forces	0	0.0	9	.5	7	0.3
Not in Labor Force	745	46.4	686	39.9	990	36.1
Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	532	70.2	583	67.8	1,011	71.1
Civilian Labor Force	532	70.2	574	66.7	1,004	70.7
Employed	513	67.7	549	63.8	986	69.4
Unemployed	19	2.5	25	2.9	18	1.3
Armed Forces	0	0.0	9	1.0	7	0.5
Not in Labor Force	226	29.8	277	32.2	410	28.9
Females 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	328	38.7	451	52.4	744	56.2
Civilian Labor Force	328	38.7	451	52.4	744	56.2
Employed	309	36.5	434	50.5	697	52.6
Unemployed	19	2.2	17	2.0	47	3.5
Armed Forces	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	-
Not in Labor Force	519	61.3	409	47.6	580	43.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.



**TABLE 2-10**  
**1980 - 2000 GEORGIA LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

<b>Total Labor Force 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	2,553,062	63.4	3,351,513	67.9	4,129,666	66.1
Civilian Labor Force	2,481,298	61.6	3,278,378	66.4	4,026,808	64.4
Employed	2,335,835	58.0	3,090,276	62.6	3,839,756	61.4
Unemployed	145,463	3.6	188,102	3.9	223,052	3.6
Armed Forces	71,764	1.8	73,135	1.5	66,858	1.1
Not in Labor Force	1,473,908	36.6	1,586,868	32.1	2,121,021	33.9
<b>Males 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	1,444,285	75.8	1,804,052	76.6	2,217,015	73.1
Civilian Labor Force	1,379,229	72.4	1,738,488	73.9	2,159,175	71.2
Employed	1,309,577	68.7	1,648,895	70.1	2,051,523	67.7
Unemployed	69,652	3.7	89,593	3.8	107,652	3.6
Armed Forces	65,056	3.4	65,564	2.8	57,840	1.9
Not in Labor Force	461,273	24.2	549,607	23.4	815,427	26.9
<b>Females 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	1,108,777	52.3	1,547,461	59.9	1,912,651	59.4
Civilian Labor Force	1,102,069	51.9	1,539,890	59.6	1,903,633	59.2
Employed	1,026,258	49.4	1,441,381	55.8	1,788,233	55.6
Unemployed	75,811	3.6	98,509	3.8	115,400	3.6
Armed Forces	6,708	0.3	7,571	0.3	9,018	0.3
Not in Labor Force	1,012,635	47.7	1,037,261	40.1	1,305,594	40.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

**TABLE 2-11**  
**1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

<b>Total Labor Force 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	106,084,668	62.0	125,182,378	65.3	138,820,935	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	104,449,817	61.0	123,473,450	64.4	137,668,798	63.4
Employed	97,639,355	57.0	115,681,202	60.3	129,721,512	59.7
Unemployed	6,810,462	4.0	7,792,248	4.1	7,947,286	3.7
Armed Forces	1,634,851	1.0	1,708,928	0.9	1,152,137	0.5
Not in Labor Force	65,129,590	38.0	66,646,893	34.7	78,347,142	36.1
<b>Males 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	61,416,203	75.1	68,509,429	74.4	74,273,203	70.8
Civilian Labor Force	59,926,488	73.3	66,986,201	72.8	73,285,305	69.8
Employed	56,004,690	68.5	62,704,579	68.1	69,091,443	65.8
Unemployed	3,921,798	4.9	4,281,622	4.7	4,193,862	4.0
Armed Forces	1,489,715	1.8	1,523,228	1.7	987,898	0.9
Not in Labor Force	20,315,887	24.9	23,516,484	25.6	30,709,079	29.3
<b>Females 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	44,688,465	49.9	56,672,949	56.8	64,547,732	57.5
Civilian Labor Force	44,523,329	49.7	56,487,249	56.6	64,383,493	57.4
Employed	41,634,665	46.5	52,976,623	53.1	60,630,069	54.0
Unemployed	2,888,664	3.2	3,510,626	3.5	3,753,424	3.4
Armed Forces	165,136	0.2	185,700	0.2	164,239	0.2
Not in Labor Force	44,813,703	50.1	43,130,409	43.2	47,638,063	42.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-12**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	47	5.7	50	5.1	123	7.3
Professional and technical specialty	58	7.1	76	7.7	124	7.3
Sales	33	4.0	134	13.6	192	11.3
Clerical and administrative support	87	10.6	124	12.6	188	11.1
Services (not private household)	65	7.9	92	9.4	173	10.2
Farming, fishing, and forestry	107	13.0	96	9.8	339	20.0
Precision production, craft, and repair	124	15.1	133	13.5	146	8.6
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	156	19.0	138	14.0	274	16.2
Transportation equipment operation	65	7.9	82	8.3	137	8.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-13**  
**1980 - 2000 GEORGIA OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Persons 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
TOTAL All Occupations	2,335,835		3,092,057		3,839,756	
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	237,945	10.2	378,984	12.3	538,647	14.0
Professional and technical specialty	317,846	13.6	493,037	16.0	717,312	18.7
Sales	239,377	10.2	379,602	12.3	446,876	11.6
Clerical and administrative support	382,738	16.4	494,484	16.0	581,364	15.1
Private household services	23,331	1.0	15,912	0.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	260,037	11.1	354,735	11.5	444,077	11.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	66,750	2.9	68,174	2.2	24,489	0.6
Precision production, craft, and repair	297,604	12.7	366,391	11.9	346,326	9.0
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	274,920	11.8	262,698	8.5	415,849	10.8
Transportation equipment operation	112,669	4.9	142,092	4.6	245,642	6.6
Labor (not farm)	122,618	5.2	134,167	4.3	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-14**  
**1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Persons 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
TOTAL All Occupations	103,719,000		115,452,905		129,721,512	
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	10,379,000	10.0	14,227,916	12.3	17,448,038	13.5
Professional and technical specialty	15,338,000	14.8	20,562,901	17.8	26,198,693	20.2
Sales	10,257,000	9.9	13,634,686	11.8	14,592,699	11.3
Clerical and administrative support	17,564,000	16.9	18,826,477	16.3	20,028,691	15.4
Private household services	627,000	0.6	521,154	0.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	12,979,000	12.5	14,774,763	12.8	15,575,101	12.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry	3,032,000	2.9	2,839,010	2.5	951,810	0.7
Precision production, craft, and repair	13,555,000	13.1	13,097,963	11.3	11,008,625	8.5
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	10,082,000	9.7	7,904,197	6.8	12,256,138	9.5
Transportation equipment operation	4,820,000	4.6	4,729,001	4.1	7,959,871	6.1
Labor (not farm)	5,086,000	4.9	4,563,134	3.9	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-15  
GENERAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

Unit	Master Economic Rank <sup>1</sup>	Taxable Sales (Millions)	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Adj. Gross Income Reported (Millions)	Rank <sup>3</sup>	Per Capita Income % of State/U.S.
<b>1979</b>		<b>1978</b>				
Lanier	148	12.0	142	13.0	147	68.2/NA
Berrien	83	45.0	85	41.0	87	80.1/NA
Brooks	99	33.0	104	30.0	111	82.1/NA
Cook	90	44.0	89	38.0	92	79.0/NA
Echols	158	1.0	159	4.0	159	61.5/NA
Irwin	118	22.0	119	24.0	120	80.2/NA
Lowndes	17	374.0	16	231.0	18	85.1/NA
Tift	32	163.0	26	115.0	38	86.8/NA
1979 GA Per Capita Income \$7,627						
<b>1982</b>		<b>1981</b>				
Lanier	141	16.0	137	15.0	148	62.0/52
Berrien	89	50.0	90	52.0	86	87.6/66
Brooks	94	38.0	106	38.0	111	63.3/53
Cook	97	50.0	91	44.0	97	63.8/54
Echols	157	1.0	159	6.0	158	58.2/49
Irwin	121	25.0	120	28	125	76.7/65
Lowndes	17	453.0	18	286	19	84.0/61.5
Tift	34	190.0	26	144	40	87.2/74
1981 GA Per Capita Income \$ 8,968			1981 U.S. Per Capita Income \$10,544			
<b>1986</b>		<b>1985</b>				
Lanier	147	21.988	133	23.357	137	67.6/62.1
Berrien	95	62.601	93	73.518	94	73.3/67.3
Brooks	101	43.011	111	53.697	109	60.0/55.1
Cook	102	65.600	92	68.725	98	68.2/62.6
Echols	156	1.800	159	7.727	157	64.8/59.6
Irwin	124	31.484	121	42.378	124	75.8/69.6
Lowndes	17	651.125	16	432.314	17	78.3/72.0
Tift	35	255.314	29	215.314	41	84.0/77.2
1986 GA. Per Capital Income \$13,451		1986 Southeast Per Capita Income \$12,698		1986 U.S. Per Capital Income \$14,638		
<b>1990</b>		<b>1989</b>				
Lanier	147	23.427	134	30.979	148	71.4/65.1
Berrien	93	73.505	93	100.490	92	72.3/66.8
Brooks	106	50.146	113	71.967	11	61.3/55.9
Cook	101	80.221	90	92.305	97	69.6/63.5
Echols	155	2.239	159	9.763	158	68.4/62.4
Irwin	131	32.510	126	50.318	132	66.0/60.2
Lowndes	20	784.264	26	599.972	24	86.9/79.3
Tift	38	321.557	27	292.082	40	89.3/81.5
1989 GA Per Capita Income \$16,050		1989 Southeast Per Capita Income \$15,409		1989 U.S. Per Capita Income \$17,592		

Unit	Master Economic Rank <sup>1</sup>	1998 Millage Rate	1999		2000	
			Rank <sup>2</sup>	Adj. Gross Income d (Millions)	Woods & Poole Wealth Index	Per Capita Income as % of State/U.S.
Turner	133	29.13	66	77	61.780	62.7/59.1
Berrien	110	24.50	89	155.2.4	69.740	72.3/68.1
Brooks	103	24.70	85	137.3	66.190	66.2/62.6
Colquitt	48	22.48	113	410.9	68.840	71/66.9
Echols	153	25.48	82	17.7		57.5/54.2
Cook	115	22.73	105	141.1	63.100	65.8/62.3
Irwin	125	28.79	36	102.9	69.170	80.9/76.3
Lowndes	26	19.47	141	1,009.8	78.960	85.1/74.2
Tift	43	20.77	127	441.5	81.610	84.8/79.9
1999 GA Per Capita Income \$27,346						
1999 U.S. Per Capita Income \$29,018						

Source: The Georgia County Guide and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004 and Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002. <sup>1</sup> Master economic rank is determined by using the information of personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags and assessed property value. Rank 1 = Highest (range 1-159)

## CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The primary purpose of the economic element is to gain some perspective of the existing and future potential of the Echols County economic base. The economic base can provide the stimulus for population growth, improve the overall quality of life and allow residents to raise families and retire in Echols County. The economic element directly impacts all other elements of the comprehensive plan, especially goals and policies, future land use plans, and the five-year short-term work programs.

Echols County's economic history has relied upon the agricultural/forestry sectors to be its mainstay through the 1980's with some minor gains and losses in the manufacturing sector thereafter. The work force, in the last thirty years has become very mobile with those workers working outside Echols County rising from 51 to 85 percent of the work force. Echols County and the vast majority of the work force reside adjacent to a large urban growth center, namely Valdosta/Lowndes County, which provides a wide range of employment opportunities and has an extensive trade area. The major employers of today, with the exception of the State and Local Government sector, are located outside Echols County. Rural farm and non-farm populations have cycled upward and downward in the decades where agricultural/forestry employment yielded to higher paying jobs outside Echols County. Consequently, small settlements have prospered and faded to bedroom "communities". Echols County has evolved into a bedroom county. As of March, 2002, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce "County Business Patterns – 2001-2002" publication, there were 56 employees at 15 establishments in the following economic sectors - agricultural services, retail, construction, services, manufacturing, real estate, health care and social services and utilities in Echols County.

To comprehend past economic trends and future expectations Tables 2-1 through 2-15 (found at the end of this chapter), have been prepared for the following subjects: type of income, employment by industry, average weekly wages, unemployment, labor force characteristics and participation rates, occupations, and general economic indicators. In most instances the county data and trends are compared to state and national trends.

### Income By Type

The sources of personal income by type for Echols County are identified and compared to the state and the nation in Tables 2-17, 2-18, and 2-19. It may not be clear what the data for personal income by type means, so the following definitions seek to explain the terminology:

- **Wage and Salary** - measures total income earned as compensation for working rendering services.
- **Other Labor Income** - measures total employer contributions to private pension or worker's compensation funds.
- **Self Employment Income** - measures total profits earned from partnerships and proprietorships.
- **Dividend, Investment, Rent and Interest Income** - measures the total income from investments and rental property.

- **Transfer Payments** - measures total income from payments by the government under many different programs, including Social Security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, veterans benefits, etc.

Tables 2-1 through 2-2 show the ways Echols County differs from the state in the "income by type". The percentages clearly portray the agricultural/forestry based economy, with nearly equal percentage numbers of "wage and salary" incomes and higher than state percentages in the "self employment" income. There are increases in earnings in the wage and salary category between 1990 and 2000, but disproportionately to the increase of self-employment income. In all years transfer payments have been higher than the state and these tend to increase during high levels of unemployment.

### **Economic Sectors**

Table 2-3 exhibit past and future employment and earnings for thirteen economic sectors, namely Farming, Agricultural Services, Mining; Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Financial, Insurance, & Real Estate; Services; Federal Government-Civilian; Federal Government-Military; and State and Local Government. Data comparisons for 1990 and 2000 are made with the State of Georgia. The employment figures represent jobs located in Echols County regardless of the residence of the jobholder. Likewise, Echols County residents who work in other counties are not included in the totals for the Echols County tables.

Echols County, between 1980 and 2000 experienced a 56.7 percent increase (+ 249 jobs) in employment (from 439 to 688). This majority of jobs that increased are in two sectors: Agricultural Services (194 jobs) and State and Local Government (55 jobs). In the state the top three employment sectors in 2000 are Educational, Health and Social Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.

The twenty-five year projected outlook for Echols County shows a net increase of 166 jobs. Ninety-one percent of the increase will be in four categories: Agricultural Services (35), State and Local Government (69), Services (27); and Retail Trade (20). By 2025 Manufacturing will drop from 13.7 percent to 6.1 percent of the total employment base. The projections for Echols County are similar to the state and the nation. The state and the nation show continual growth in retail, wholesale, and service sectors and a slight drop in the manufacturing sector.

### **Average Weekly Wages**

Table 2-5 shows the 1980 - 2000 average weekly wage for Echols County and the State of Georgia. During this twenty-year period weekly wages for "all industries" increased 68 percent in Echols County and 184 percent for the state. To top it off Echols County's average weekly wage in 2000 was just 38 percent of the state average weekly wage, so comparisons are impossible. It is a case of the rural wage rates not keeping pace with urban/metropolitan wage structure.

### **Unemployment Rates**

Between 1990 and 2002 Echols County's unemployment rate in a majority of these years was lower than the United States and Georgia. (See Table 2-6). Echols County averages a 4.37 percent unemployment rate and this is second lowest of the nine-county South Georgia region.

### **Labor Force Characteristics**

In Table 2-7 the percentage and number of private wage and salary workers, government workers, and self-employed workers has increased between 1980 and 2000. Unpaid family workers have declined to zero in 2000. The growth was a result of expansions in the regional economy and this allowed the private wage and salary workers to seek positions outside Echols County. Private wage and salary workers increased by



368 persons or 60.9 percent, while Government workers increased by 76 or 55.9 percent between 1980 and 2000.

The residents commuting to work outside the county has risen from 51 percent to 85 percent of the work force between 1970 and 2000. Echols County has upwards of ninety percent of land area devoted to the production of commercial forests and has neither the resources nor the desire to provide the necessary infrastructure to support new industries and major commercial enterprises. The desire to live in Echols County and work elsewhere has been supported by the leaders and the general public in Echols County. In 2000, 15 percent of the workforce were residents working in Echols County. The majority 85 percent (1,431) of the residents of Echols County work outside the county at the following locations:

<u>Work Destinations</u>	<u>Number of Workers</u>	<u>% of Total Working Outside Echols</u>
Lowndes County	1,203	84.1
Hamilton County, FL	82	5.7
Madison County, FL	10	0.7
Clinch County	35	2.4
Lanier County	30	2.1
Thomas County	13	0.9
Tift County	8	0.6
Elsewhere	39	2.7

Tables 2-9, 2-10, and 2-11 show the rate of labor force participation in various categories for the total labor force, male and female labor force, all broken down for Echols County, the state and the nation. Echols County "in labor force, males and females" categories were lower than the state and the nation in 1980, 1990 and 2000. The Echols County female participation rate rose from 38.7 percent in 1980, 52.4 percent in 1990, to 56.2 percent in 2000. The male participation rate in Echols County rose slightly from 70.2 percent to 71.1 percent between 1980 and 2000. On the whole the Echols County female work force seem to experience less unemployment than the male gender in the county, state and nation. This says something about the industrial strength, job skills and employment stability in boom and recessionary years.

Tables 2-12, 2-13, and 2-14 provide a very broad view of the work-related skills and backgrounds of Echols County residents, the State of Georgia and the nation. The work skill categories of "professional and technical specialty and clerical & administrative support" hold the most persons in the state and the nation. Echols County's top four occupational categories in 2000 were "Equipment operation, assembly, inspection; Sales; Farming, Fishing and Forestry; and Clerical and Administrative support. Back twenty years ago the top four occupational categories were Equipment operation, Assembly and Inspection; Farming, Fishing, and Forestry; Precision Production, Craft and Repair; and Clerical and Administrative Support.

### **Comparative Economic Indicators**

The statewide master economic rank compares all 159 counties in Georgia (See Table 2-15). It is a measure of economic health based on personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags, and assessed property value. Table 2-15 shows how Echols County compares statewide and to eight neighboring counties. Echols County's Master Economic Rank has ranged from a high of 158 in 1979 to a low of 153 in 1999. (1 is the highest and 159 is the lowest) Of the eight counties, Echols County has ranked eighth for the last twenty years. But to the County's credit their statewide rank has improved each year. "Total taxable sales" in Echols County rose 123.9% between 1979 and 1990. Irwin, Brooks and Berrien counties had 48%, 52% and 63% respective increases and the other four counties ranged from 82% to 109% taxable sales increases between 1979-1990. The percentage increase for taxable sales statewide was 76%, so Echols County is in better condition than a few counties and worse off than other counties. (These numbers are not in "constant dollars", but if they were the Echols County increase between 1979 and 1990 would evaporate.)

Per capita income as a percent of State and USA per capita incomes are also shown in Table 2-15. Echols County's per capita income compared more favorably with the state and nation in 1985 and 1989, but slid backwards in 1999 due in part to seasonal farm labor

The Retail Pull Factor reported in the Georgia County Guide, 2001 is a measurement of a county's retail buying power that incorporates the effects of income and population on a county's retail sales activity. A high pull factor > 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing into the county, and a low pull factor < 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing out of the county. The following show the adjacent counties pull factors:

	<b>Pull Factor</b>
Echols	0.03
Clinch	0.60
Atkinson	0.47
Lanier	0.49
Lowndes	1.74

### **Inventory and Assessment of Economic Base**

**Farming and Agricultural Services** - The farming/agricultural services sector in the 1980's employed 30 percent of the work force and by 2000 it constituted 42 percent of the work force. By 2025 this sector will account for 37 percent of the work force. Farming and Agricultural Services by 2025, will continue to play a stabilizing role in Echols County's economic base.

**Mining** - The tabular summaries show mining employment was non-existent, because numbers were not available. However, the actual mining employment base was 20 employees. Sand mining will continue throughout the planning period.

**Construction** - Construction employment rose and fell throughout the 1980-2000 era with 0.6 percent of the total in 1970, 0.8 percent in 1990, and 1.5 percent in 2000. Between 2000 and 2025 employment will rise slightly to 2.1 percent of the work force.

**Manufacturing** - This was the most devastated sector in Echols County with employment decreasing from 19.5 percent to 9.0 percent between 1980 and 1990. By 2000, manufacturing represented 7.6 percent of the in county work force. Employment projections to 2025 show it will continue to decline to 6.1 percent of the in county work force.

**Transportation, Communications, & Public Utilities** - This sector provides 2.5 percent of the employment. The twenty-five year forecast shows 2.8 percent in employment. This means that employment will increase slightly to the year 2025.

**Wholesale Trade** – The wholesale trade sector did not appear until 1985. Its relative share of employment will drop from 3.3 percent for employment in 2000 to 2.8 percent by 2025.

**Retail Trade** - The retail trade sector has "roller-coasted" in employment and earnings from 1980 to 2000. The numerical level of employment will increase and have 5.6 percent of the work force by 2025.

**Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate** - This sector came into being in 1985 and plays a minor role in total employment. Total employment will rise slightly from 3.1 percent in 2000 to 3.3 percent by 2025.

**Services** - The services sector increased in employment and earnings from 1970 to 1985, and fell drastically by 1990. This sector includes motels, restaurants, business services, automotive repair, amusement and recreation businesses, health, legal, and social services. This service sector has peaked and will level off at 10.4% of employment by 2025.

**State and Local Government** - This sector includes teachers, hospital and nursing home employees, county and state employees, and public and safety personnel. The employment share ranged from 27.1 percent in 1980 to 25.3 percent in 2000, and is projected to be 28.5 percent by 2025.

**Special or Unique Economic Sectors** - Echols County "self employment income" in actual dollars rose by 677 percent between 1990 and 2000. This constituted a 13.5 percent increase (from 7.8 percent to 21.3 percent) in the income by type totals. Government transfer payments including: Federal old age, survivors, disability, and hospital insurance; supplementary medical insurance; state unemployment insurance; railroad retirement and unemployment insurance; government retirement; federal and state government insured workers compensation; veterans benefits; food stamps; black lung payments; supplemental security income; and direct relief decreased from 11.2 percent of income by type to 9.9 percent in 2000. (See Table 2-1.)

Perhaps the most positive indication of decrease of transfer income is that a high proportion of a county's potential labor force is now productive. This usually means an increase in potential taxpayers and an improved ability to support needed community services and improvements.

### **Planned Major Economic Activities**

Echols County has preliminary plans to locate new industries and purchase industrial park land and seek assistance to get the industrial park serviced with water and sanitary sewer services.

### **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**

Since 1999, Echols County has partnered with Berrien, Lanier and Lowndes Counties in a joint economic development authority that fosters area-wide economic development projects. By 2005, Echols County had used a Learn and Serve grant to request a Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment from Georgia Tech-Economic Development Institute that recommended five major priorities: (1) formalize an economic development group; (2) review the local government structure to see if it meets local needs; (3) investigate revenue enhancement efforts; (4) improve communications via a community Web site, current school-based newsletter, The Valdosta Daily Times; and (5) educate the public on the importance of economic development. Interested citizens have formed the Economic Development Group Echols and have established their vision, mission, By-Laws, and selected officers. The Echols County Commission in 2004 allocated \$20,000 to pay for a part-time economic developer.

### **Educational and Training Opportunities**

The Valdosta Technical Institute has offered a wide range of educational programs ranging from adult basic education to highly technical occupational skills. This school has the capacity to retrain those persons displaced by automotive and technological changes, and training personnel for new job skills in partnership with existing industry needs. There is a four-year college in Valdosta that offers courses and degrees readily applicable to local businesses and industries.

### **RDC Economic Development Tools and Programs**

The South Georgia Regional Development Center has facilities located at 327 West Savannah Avenue, 116 McKey Street, and 901 North Toombs Street, Valdosta, Georgia. Facilities on Savannah Avenue consist of three structures with a combined floor area of 8,025 square feet. Facilities on McKey Street consist of approximately 3,600 square feet and those on Toombs Street occupy 3,260 square feet.

Housed at the Regional Development Center on Savannah Avenue are office spaces for programs including Economic Development, Local and Regional Planning, Community Development Programs, Administration, Geographic Information Systems, graphics and conference space for administrative needs.

Activities on McKey Street include data processing for 26 cities and nine counties, and administration of the data processing systems. Activities at the Toombs Street location include the Job Training Partnership Program administration and intake center offices.

Specific programs and financing mechanisms for industrial development and business financing handled by the South Georgia Regional Development Center include: Economic Development Administration-Revolving Program; Small Business Administration-7A & 504 Loan Programs; Rural Development Administration-Intermediary Re-lending Program, Rural Business Enterprise, & Business and Industry Loan Program; and Georgia Department of Community Affairs-Employment Incentive Program.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

### **GOAL**

**Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.**

### **POLICIES**

- Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance.
- Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged through the creation of the Echols County Industrial Development Authority and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments.
- Echols County should actively pursue the development of a public industrial park and the provision of a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the Statenville area.
- Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.
- Diversification of the economic base should be fostered and maintained. The development of recreational, educational and health care facilities and services should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and support industrial development.

### **GOAL**

**Encourage economic development through business/industry recruitment and/or expansions that capitalize on and are compatible with the natural attributes of Echols County.**

### **POLICIES**

- Economic developments should be compatible with environmental standards.
- In cases where development is incompatible with the environment, such developments should be located where environmental and social costs are minimized.

#### **GOAL**

**Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.
- Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.
- Programs should be developed which encourage local college and technical school graduates to seek employment within the county.
- Industries, both existing and new, should initiate on-the-job training programs for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

#### **GOALS**

**Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing economic development and to encourage future economic growth.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Industrial growth and expansions should be located within or adjacent to industrial parks and sites that can be readily served by public utilities.
- The development of cultural, historic and educational services and facilities should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and foster economic and industrial development.

**TABLE 2-1**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY INCOME BY TYPE**  
**(thousands of dollars)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	20,612,342		58,374,600	
Wage & Salary	15,511,191	75.3%	37,264,100	63.8%
Other Labor	595,337	2.9%	1,177,100	2.0%
Self Employment Income	1,597,506	7.8%	12,405,900	21.3%
Interest, dividends, or rent Income	490,506	2.4%	1,755,500	3.0%
Social Security Income	1,356,498	6.6%	3,875,400	6.6%
Public Assistance Income	300,498	1.5%	406,700	0.7%
Retirement Income	760,803	3.7%	1,489,400	2.6%

Source: U. S. Census, Summary File 3, 2000.

**TABLE 2-2**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA INCOME BY TYPE**  
**(millions of dollars)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	87,114		170,272	
Wage & Salary	68,394	78.5%	133,221	78.2%
Other Labor	980	1.1%	2,898	1.7%
Self Employment Income	5,450	6.3%	9,529	5.6%
Interest, Dividends or Rent Income	4,898	5.6%	8,973	5.3%
Social Security Income	3,776	4.3%	6,882	4.0%
Public Assistance Income	625	0.7%	.375	0.2%
Retirement Income	2,990	3.4%	7,776	4.6%

Source: U. S. Census, Summary File 3, 2000.

**TABLE 2-3**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR**  
**(Number and percent of Jobs)**

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	439		494		509		594		688	
Farming	131	29.8	121	24.4	134	26.3	114	19.2	94	13.7
Agriculture Services	1	.2	22	4.4	41	8.1	118	19.9	195	28.3
Mining	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Construction	4	.9	7	1.4	4	0.8	6	1.0	10	1.5
Manufacturing	86	19.5	38	7.6	46	9.0	50	8.4	52	7.6
Transp. Comm. Util.	11	2.5	13	2.6	17	3.3	17	2.9	17	2.5
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0	12	2.4	12	2.4	15	2.5	23	3.3
Retail Trade	19	4.6	25	5.0	64	12.6	46	7.7	28	4.1
Finance., Ins., Real Est	0	0.0	7	1.4	6	1.2	13	2.2	21	3.1
Services	57	12.9	127	25.7	42	8.3	52	8.8	62	9.0
Federal Govt - Civilian	6	1.3	2	.4	3	0.6	2	0.3	2	0.3
Federal Govt - Military	5	1.1	12	2.4	11	2.2	10	1.7	10	1.5
State and Local Govt	119	27.1	108	21.8	129	25.3	151	25.4	174	25.3
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	733		766		795		825		854	
Farming	86	11.7	79	10.3	74	9.3	70	8.5	66	7.7
Agriculture Services	204	27.8	214	27.9	225	28.3	237	28.7	250	29.3
Mining	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Construction	13	1.8	15	2.0	16	2.0	17	2.1	18	2.1
Manufacturing	52	7.1	51	6.7	51	6.4	51	6.2	52	6.1
Transp. Comm. Util.	18	2.5	20	2.6	21	2.6	23	2.8	24	1.8
Wholesale Trade	23	3.1	23	3.0	24	3.0	24	2.9	24	2.8
Retail Trade	37	5.0	42	5.5	45	5.7	47	5.7	48	5.6
Finance., Ins., Real Est	22	3.0	24	3.1	25	3.1	26	3.2	28	3.3
Services	78	10.6	85	11.1	87	10.9	89	10.8	89	10.4
Federal Govt – Civilian	2	0.3	2	0.3	2	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2
Federal Govt – Military	10	1.4	10	1.3	10	1.3	10	1.2	10	1.2
State and Local Govt	188	25.6	201	26.2	215	27.0	229	27.8	243	28.5

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. 2002. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

**TABLE 2-4**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**(number and percent of jobs)**

	1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%
<b>Total</b>	3,090,276		3,839,756	
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	82,537	2.7	53,201	1.4
Construction	214,359	6.9	304,710	7.9
Manufacturing	585,423	18.9	568,830	14.8
Wholesale Trade	156,838	5.1	148,026	3.9
Retail Trade	508,861	16.5	459,548	12.0
Transp. Comm. Util.	263,419	8.5	231,304	6.0
Information	NA	-	135,496	3.5
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	201,422	6.5	251,240	6.5
Professional, Scientific, Adm., manage., services	151,096	4.9	362,414	9.4
Educational, Health, Social Services	461,307	14.9	675,593	17.6
Arts, Entertainment., Accomm., Food Services	31,911	1.0	274,437	7.1
Other Services	266,053	8.6	181,829	4.7
Public Administration	167,050	5.4	193,128	5.0

Source: U. S. Census Summary File 3, 2000.



**TABLE 2-5**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY SECTOR**  
**(actual dollars)**

	Echols County			State		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
All Industries	158	264	266	248	425	704
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	NR	150	253	179	276	421
Mining	NR	NR	D	323	589	952
Construction	NR	NR	D	264	434	710
Manufacture of Durable Goods	216	471	D	261	449	761
Transp., Communications, Public Utilities	D	280	D	372	603	838
Wholesale	NR	D	D	337	603	1,032
Retail	D	216	D	164	236	454
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	NR	NR	D	274	543	1,117
Services	NR	D	306	214	414	482
Federal Government	333	291	D		534	D
State Government	D	357	468	287	386	681
Local Government	D	D	D		450	D
Miscellaneous, Not elsewhere identified	NR	NR		202	341	483

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, various years.

"D" = the source has data but that data cannot be disclosed.

"NR" = no data was reported by the data source.

**TABLE 2-6**  
**1990 - 2002 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**  
**UNITED STATES, GEORGIA AND SOUTH GEORGIA RDC COUNTIES**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Nation	5.6%	6.8%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	5.40%	5.70%
Georgia	5.5%	5.0%	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	4.00%	5.10%
South GA	5.8%	4.8%	6.7%	6.3%	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	5.1%	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%	4.60%	4.30%
Ben Hill	6.4%	5.5%	7%	7.3%	6.2%	5.2%	6.4%	6.8%	6.1%	6.4%	6.2%	5.60%	5.90%
Brooks	3.8%	3.3%	4.9%	4.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	5.3%	6.0%	4.5%	5.7%	5.10%	4.80%
Cook	6.5%	7.1%	7.5%	6.9%	4.9%	3.6%	3.9%	5.2%	4.8%	5.0%	5.1%	5.00%	4.30%
<b>Echols</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>3.70%</b>	<b>2.90%</b>
Irwin	5.9%	4.7%	5.9%	6.0%	4.8%	4.5%	4.9%	5.7%	5.3%	4.7%	5.7%	5.60%	5.50%
Lanier	4.8%	4.1%	5.6%	5.3%	3.7%	4.0%	5.3%	3.5%	2.9%	4.1%	5.7%	3.90%	3.80%
Lowndes	4.8%	3.9%	6.2%	5.4%	4.4%	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.0%	4.4%	5.6%	3.70%	3.50%
Tift	7.4%	5.6%	7.5%	7.4%	6.0%	5.8%	5.5%	5.7%	5.6%	4.9%	4.6%	4.40%	3.90%
Turner	7.9%	5.3%	8.8%	7.5%	6.6%	7.2%	7.3%	11.1%	12.1%	10.1%	8.8%	8.50%	8.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & Georgia Department of Labor. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

**TABLE 2-7**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT**  
**(number and percent of persons)**

	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total Employed	822		983		1,273	
Private Wage or Salary Workers	604	73.5	753	76.6	972	76.4
Government Workers	136	16.5	156	15.9	212	16.7
Self-Employed Workers	80	9.7	62	6.3	89	7.0
Unpaid Family Workers	2	.3	12	1.2	0	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-8**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK**  
**(number and percent of persons)**

	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Residents Working Inside County	246	34.3%	156	16.0%	252	15.0%
Residents Working Outside County	472	65.7%	821	84.0%	1,431	85.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

**TABLE 2-9**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

Total Labor Force 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	860	53.6	1,034	60.1	1,755	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	860	53.6	1,025	59.6	1,748	63.7
Employed	822	51.2	983	57.2	1,683	61.3
Unemployed	38	2.4	42	2.4	65	2.4
Armed Forces	0	0.0	9	.5	7	0.3
Not in Labor Force	745	46.4	686	39.9	990	36.1
Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
In Labor Force	532	70.2	583	67.8	1,011	71.1
Civilian Labor Force	532	70.2	574	66.7	1,004	70.7
Employed	513	67.7	549	63.8	986	69.4
Unemployed	19	2.5	25	2.9	18	1.3
Armed Forces	0	0.0	9	1.0	7	0.5
Not in Labor Force	226	29.8	277	32.2	410	28.9
Females 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
In Labor Force	328	38.7	451	52.4	744	56.2
Civilian Labor Force	328	38.7	451	52.4	744	56.2
Employed	309	36.5	434	50.5	697	52.6
Unemployed	19	2.2	17	2.0	47	3.5
Armed Forces	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	-
Not in Labor Force	519	61.3	409	47.6	580	43.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

**TABLE 2-10**  
**1980 - 2000 GEORGIA LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

<b>Total Labor Force 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	2,553,062	63.4	3,351,513	67.9	4,129,666	66.1
Civilian Labor Force	2,481,298	61.6	3,278,378	66.4	4,026,808	64.4
Employed	2,335,835	58.0	3,090,276	62.6	3,839,756	61.4
Unemployed	145,463	3.6	188,102	3.9	223,052	3.6
Armed Forces	71,764	1.8	73,135	1.5	66,858	1.1
Not in Labor Force	1,473,908	36.6	1,586,868	32.1	2,121,021	33.9
<b>Males 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	1,444,285	75.8	1,804,052	76.6	2,217,015	73.1
Civilian Labor Force	1,379,229	72.4	1,738,488	73.9	2,159,175	71.2
Employed	1,309,577	68.7	1,648,895	70.1	2,051,523	67.7
Unemployed	69,652	3.7	89,593	3.8	107,652	3.6
Armed Forces	65,056	3.4	65,564	2.8	57,840	1.9
Not in Labor Force	461,273	24.2	549,607	23.4	815,427	26.9
<b>Females 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	1,108,777	52.3	1,547,461	59.9	1,912,651	59.4
Civilian Labor Force	1,102,069	51.9	1,539,890	59.6	1,903,633	59.2
Employed	1,026,258	49.4	1,441,381	55.8	1,788,233	55.6
Unemployed	75,811	3.6	98,509	3.8	115,400	3.6
Armed Forces	6,708	0.3	7,571	0.3	9,018	0.3
Not in Labor Force	1,012,635	47.7	1,037,261	40.1	1,305,594	40.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

**TABLE 2-11**  
**1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**  
**(persons, 16 years old and older)**

<b>Total Labor Force 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	106,084,668	62.0	125,182,378	65.3	138,820,935	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	104,449,817	61.0	123,473,450	64.4	137,668,798	63.4
Employed	97,639,355	57.0	115,681,202	60.3	129,721,512	59.7
Unemployed	6,810,462	4.0	7,792,248	4.1	7,947,286	3.7
Armed Forces	1,634,851	1.0	1,708,928	0.9	1,152,137	0.5
Not in Labor Force	65,129,590	38.0	66,646,893	34.7	78,347,142	36.1
<b>Males 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	61,416,203	75.1	68,509,429	74.4	74,273,203	70.8
Civilian Labor Force	59,926,488	73.3	66,986,201	72.8	73,285,305	69.8
Employed	56,004,690	68.5	62,704,579	68.1	69,091,443	65.8
Unemployed	3,921,798	4.9	4,281,622	4.7	4,193,862	4.0
Armed Forces	1,489,715	1.8	1,523,228	1.7	987,898	0.9
Not in Labor Force	20,315,887	24.9	23,516,484	25.6	30,709,079	29.3
<b>Females 16-years and older</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
In Labor Force	44,688,465	49.9	56,672,949	56.8	64,547,732	57.5
Civilian Labor Force	44,523,329	49.7	56,487,249	56.6	64,383,493	57.4
Employed	41,634,665	46.5	52,976,623	53.1	60,630,069	54.0
Unemployed	2,888,664	3.2	3,510,626	3.5	3,753,424	3.4
Armed Forces	165,136	0.2	185,700	0.2	164,239	0.2
Not in Labor Force	44,813,703	50.1	43,130,409	43.2	47,638,063	42.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-12**  
**1980 - 2000 ECHOLS COUNTY OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	47	5.7	50	5.1	123	7.3
Professional and technical specialty	58	7.1	76	7.7	124	7.3
Sales	33	4.0	134	13.6	192	11.3
Clerical and administrative support	87	10.6	124	12.6	188	11.1
Services (not private household)	65	7.9	92	9.4	173	10.2
Farming, fishing, and forestry	107	13.0	96	9.8	339	20.0
Precision production, craft, and repair	124	15.1	133	13.5	146	8.6
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	156	19.0	138	14.0	274	16.2
Transportation equipment operation	65	7.9	82	8.3	137	8.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-13**  
**1980 - 2000 GEORGIA OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Persons 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
TOTAL All Occupations	2,335,835		3,092,057		3,839,756	
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	237,945	10.2	378,984	12.3	538,647	14.0
Professional and technical specialty	317,846	13.6	493,037	16.0	717,312	18.7
Sales	239,377	10.2	379,602	12.3	446,876	11.6
Clerical and administrative support	382,738	16.4	494,484	16.0	581,364	15.1
Private household services	23,331	1.0	15,912	0.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	260,037	11.1	354,735	11.5	444,077	11.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	66,750	2.9	68,174	2.2	24,489	0.6
Precision production, craft, and repair	297,604	12.7	366,391	11.9	346,326	9.0
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	274,920	11.8	262,698	8.5	415,849	10.8
Transportation equipment operation	112,669	4.9	142,092	4.6	245,642	6.6
Labor (not farm)	122,618	5.2	134,167	4.3	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-14**  
**1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS**  
**(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

Persons 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
TOTAL All Occupations	103,719,000		115,452,905		129,721,512	
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	10,379,000	10.0	14,227,916	12.3	17,448,038	13.5
Professional and technical specialty	15,338,000	14.8	20,562,901	17.8	26,198,693	20.2
Sales	10,257,000	9.9	13,634,686	11.8	14,592,699	11.3
Clerical and administrative support	17,564,000	16.9	18,826,477	16.3	20,028,691	15.4
Private household services	627,000	0.6	521,154	0.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	12,979,000	12.5	14,774,763	12.8	15,575,101	12.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry	3,032,000	2.9	2,839,010	2.5	951,810	0.7
Precision production, craft, and repair	13,555,000	13.1	13,097,963	11.3	11,008,625	8.5
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	10,082,000	9.7	7,904,197	6.8	12,256,138	9.5
Transportation equipment operation	4,820,000	4.6	4,729,001	4.1	7,959,871	6.1
Labor (not farm)	5,086,000	4.9	4,563,134	3.9	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-15  
GENERAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

Unit	Master Economic Rank <sup>1</sup>	Taxable Sales (Millions)	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Adj. Gross Income Reported (Millions)	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Per Capita Income % of State/U.S.
<b>1979</b>		<b>1978</b>				
Lanier	148	12.0	142	13.0	147	68.2/NA
Berrien	83	45.0	85	41.0	87	80.1/NA
Brooks	99	33.0	104	30.0	111	82.1/NA
Cook	90	44.0	89	38.0	92	79.0/NA
Echols	158	1.0	159	4.0	159	61.5/NA
Irwin	118	22.0	119	24.0	120	80.2/NA
Lowndes	17	374.0	16	231.0	18	85.1/NA
Tift	32	163.0	26	115.0	38	86.8/NA
1979 GA Per Capita Income \$7,627						
<b>1982</b>		<b>1981</b>				
Lanier	141	16.0	137	15.0	148	62.0/52
Berrien	89	50.0	90	52.0	86	87.6/66
Brooks	94	38.0	106	38.0	111	63.3/53
Cook	97	50.0	91	44.0	97	63.8/54
Echols	157	1.0	159	6.0	158	58.2/49
Irwin	121	25.0	120	28	125	76.7/65
Lowndes	17	453.0	18	286	19	84.0/61.5
Tift	34	190.0	26	144	40	87.2/74
1981 GA Per Capita Income \$ 8,968			1981 U.S. Per Capita Income \$10,544			
<b>1986</b>		<b>1985</b>				
Lanier	147	21.988	133	23.357	137	67.6/62.1
Berrien	95	62.601	93	73.518	94	73.3/67.3
Brooks	101	43.011	111	53.697	109	60.0/55.1
Cook	102	65.600	92	68.725	98	68.2/62.6
Echols	156	1.800	159	7.727	157	64.8/59.6
Irwin	124	31.484	121	42.378	124	75.8/69.6
Lowndes	17	651.125	16	432.314	17	78.3/72.0
Tift	35	255.314	29	215.314	41	84.0/77.2
1986 GA. Per Capital Income \$13,451		1986 Southeast Per Capita Income \$12,698		1986 U.S. Per Capital Income \$14,638		
<b>1990</b>		<b>1989</b>				
Lanier	147	23.427	134	30.979	148	71.4/65.1
Berrien	93	73.505	93	100.490	92	72.3/66.8
Brooks	106	50.146	113	71.967	11	61.3/55.9
Cook	101	80.221	90	92.305	97	69.6/63.5
Echols	155	2.239	159	9.763	158	68.4/62.4
Irwin	131	32.510	126	50.318	132	66.0/60.2
Lowndes	20	784.264	26	599.972	24	86.9/79.3
Tift	38	321.557	27	292.082	40	89.3/81.5
1989 GA Per Capita Income \$16,050		1989 Southeast Per Capita Income \$15,409		1989 U.S. Per Capita Income \$17,592		



Unit	Master Economic Rank <sup>1</sup>	1998 Millage Rate	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Adj. Gross Income d (Millions)	Woods & Poole Wealth Index	Per Capita Income as % of State/U.S.
1999			2000			
Turner	133	29.13	66	77	61.780	62.7/59.1
Berrien	110	24.50	89	155.2.4	69.740	72.3/68.1
Brooks	103	24.70	85	137.3	66.190	66.2/62.6
Colquitt	48	22.48	113	410.9	68.840	71/66.9
Echols	153	25.48	82	17.7		57.5/54.2
Cook	115	22.73	105	141.1	63.100	65.8/62.3
Irwin	125	28.79	36	102.9	69.170	80.9/76.3
Lowndes	26	19.47	141	1,009.8	78.960	85.1/74.2
Tift	43	20.77	127	441.5	81.610	84.8/79.9
1999 GA Per Capita Income \$27,346						
1999 U.S. Per Capita Income \$29,018						

Source: The Georgia County Guide and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004 and Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002. <sup>1</sup> Master economic rank is determined by using the information of personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags and assessed property value. Rank 1 = Highest (range 1-159)

## CHAPTER THREE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Consideration of natural resources is an important item in planning future growth patterns for any community. For Echols County, the characteristics of the natural environment including soils, topography, climate, water supply, and wildlife habitats is essential information in defining the county's existing attributes and potential areas of improvements. An understanding of these will guide county leaders in maintaining a high quality of life and protecting the county's future. Numerous times in this chapter the community will be advised to consult the enclosed maps for making basic determinations about land uses and location of developments relative to the boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas. To assist the community with making more accurate determinations at more reasonable scales, this data has been integrated into the community's Geographic Information System (GIS) housed at South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC). This data is also available for viewing and query at numerous GIS-capable terminals throughout the county.

Echols County is located along the central part of Georgia's southern boundary and has a total land area of 271,760 acres, or about 425 square miles. It is within the Alapaha Soil and Water Conservation District as well as the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods Major Land Resource Area. Most of the county's land area is poorly drained and is not well-suited for agriculture (other than commercial timber production) or urban development. The physical landscape is fairly homogenous with no outstanding physical features. Most of the land is forested for commercial timber production. The following natural resource areas have been examined and surveyed as they pertain to Echols County.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Echols County is divided into two physiographic districts, the Okefenokee Basin District and the Tifton Upland District, both of the Atlantic Plain Major Division (Coastal Plain Province). The county's land surface is mostly level and mottled with numerous shallow depressions. Some areas which are closer to the major rivers are more gently sloping. The county is dissected by numerous shallow rivers and streams which generally flow from north to south through numerous swamps and sloughs. The largest of these include the Alapaha River which flows north to south through the western third of the county and the Suwannee River which flows through the southeastern corner of the county. Other large streams include the Suwanoochee Creek which forms the county's northeastern border, Grand Bay Creek and Alapahoochee River in the extreme western part of the county, and Toms Creek which flows southeastward through the center of the county.

Most of Echols County's land area ranges 135-160 feet above sea level. The county's lowest elevation is about 75 feet in the southwestern part of the county where the Alapaha River enters neighboring Hamilton County, Florida. The highest elevation is 177 feet at the railroad crossing along US 129 near the community of Mayday. Other elevations worthy of note include: 85 feet where the Suwannee River enters Florida, Statenville 138 feet, Haylow 167 feet, Howell 170 feet, Mayday 160 feet, Needmore 135 feet, Potter 147 feet, and Tarver 156 feet.

The county's topography and forest cover is such that notable views and vistas are not present. The most pronounced topography are moderate slopes of about 15 feet where the surrounding land area drops down to the floodplains of the Suwannee and Alapaha Rivers, and again dropping about 15 feet to the water in the main stream channels. These floodplains are flat and range from approximately 4,000 to 8,000 feet wide. Like other major rivers in South Georgia, these two rivers are designated protected river corridors and contain a dense tree canopy. The Alapaha River is navigable by canoe only part of the year and the Suwannee River is navigable by canoe year round.

Echols County's bedrock is composed of Pliocene-Miocene-Oligocene sedimentary rocks which were formed mostly during the Cenozoic Era (up to 70 million years ago). Below this, the rocks are Eocene and Paleocene sedimentary rocks. The sediments which formed these rocks originated in the "ancient" Appalachian Mountains that have been eroded to form the present day Piedmont and remnant mountains.

Echols County's climate is classified as humid-mesothermal (Cfa) according to the Köppen climate classification system. Winters are short and mildly cool with periodic cold spells moderating in 1-2 days. Summers are hot and

humid. Annual precipitation is typically about 50 inches and is spread evenly throughout the year (2-5 inches each month). Measurable snowfalls are very rare with a less than 5% probability each year. When they occur, snowfall amounts are most always less than one inch and melt quickly. In winter, the average minimum daily temperature is 39 degrees. In summer, the average maximum daily temperature is 90 degrees. Echols County's growing season ranges from 8-9 months with an average of 260 days that have daily minimum temperatures greater than 32 degrees. The first winter freeze typically occurs in early November and the last freeze typically occurs in mid-March.

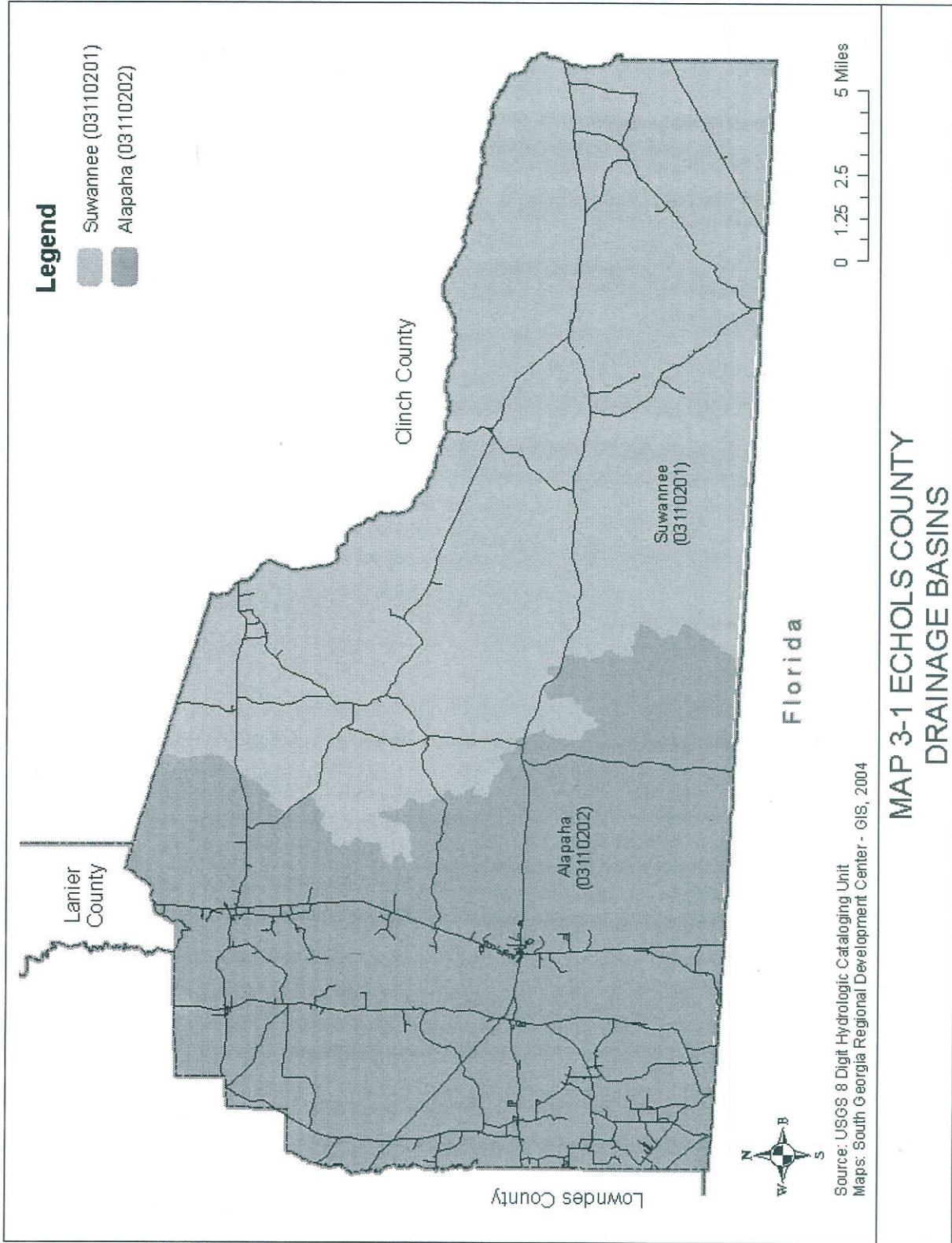
## **WATER RESOURCES**

Annual precipitation runoff for Echols County is about 10 inches, which equals approximately 9.87 billion cubic feet (73.83 billion gallons) of water. This represents the volume of water directly entering the county's ponds, rivers and streams. The remaining water either evaporates or is absorbed by the ground. Except for the major rivers, surface drainage within Echols County is typically slow and directed by a dendritic (branching tree-like) pattern of small streams, sloughs and swamps. The general flow is from north to south. The entire county is located within the Suwannee River Basin which is one of the last large (9,950 square miles), intact river drainages remaining in the U.S. and eventually drains into the Gulf of Mexico. In Echols County, the Suwannee River Basin can be subdivided into 2 sub-watersheds (smaller drainage basins), the Suwannee (HUC 03110201) and Alapaha (HUC 03110202). Map 3-1 depicts these drainage basins within Echols County. The Alapaha subwatershed (drainage basin) encompasses only the western third of the county and its major tributaries include the Alapaha River, Alapahoochee River (Grand Bay Creek) and Alligator Creek. The Alapaha River enters Florida and flows for another 15-20 miles before reaching the Suwannee River. The remaining portion (eastern two-thirds) of Echols County flows more directly to the Suwannee River which crosses the extreme southeastern portion of the county. The major tributaries here include Suwannoochee Creek and Toms Creek.

## **PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SOURCES**

Typical of coastal plain areas, most of Echols County's consumer water comes from underground aquifers which are porous underground rock layers containing water. The main aquifer beneath Echols County is the Floridian aquifer which consists of confined limestone, dolostone, and calcareous sand. This aquifer serves as the water supply watershed for consumer well water as well as many agricultural irrigation systems. Beneath the Floridian aquifer are the Claiborne and Clayton aquifers. The Floridian aquifer is principally recharged immediately south of the Fall Line that stretches across central Georgia from Columbus to Macon to Augusta. This is the point at which streams from harder rock formations of the Piedmont cross into softer rock formations of the Coastal Plain. Most sedimentary rock formations of the Coastal Plain begin at the ground surface just south of the Fall Line; therefore this is where most aquifer water originates.

Total water consumption in Echols County averages approximately 6.6 million gallons per day. Approximately 6.07 million gallons (92%) of this comes from groundwater and the remaining 530,000 gallons (8%) is from surface water. The irrigated acres in Echols County have increased 213.9% from 1982 to 1997. Table 3-1 (next page) depicts the breakdown of water consumption in Echols County.



**TABLE 3-1**  
**ECHOLS COUNTY AVERAGE DAILY WATER CONSUMPTION**  
**(Number of gallons)**

{PRIVATE } User Category	Groundwater		Surface Water		Total Consumption	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
crop irrigation	5,760,000	94.9	520,000	98.1	<b>6,280,000</b>	95.2
livestock	----	----	10,000	1.9	<b>10,000</b>	0.3
public water supply --- domestic	60,000	1.0	----	----	<b>60,000</b>	1.9
public water supply --- other	----	----	----	----	----	----
self-supplied --- domestic/commercial	250,000	4.1	----	----	<b>250,000</b>	3.5
self-supplied --- industrial	----	----	----	----	----	----
<b>TOTAL CONSUMPTION</b>	<b>6,070,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>530,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,600,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Georgia Water Use by County, 2000. (numbers are translated from "millions of gallons per day (mgd)" calculations).

The vertical distance from the ground surface to the top of the first major subterranean reservoir is approximately 200 feet in the western part of the county and approximately 300 feet in the eastern part. Most wells in the county range from 200-500 feet deep. Groundwater throughout the county is typically very hard. Surface water in Echols County is only used for irrigation and livestock, and this practice is becoming increasingly popular. Many farm fields contain small ponds which result from dammed up local streams.

#### **WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS**

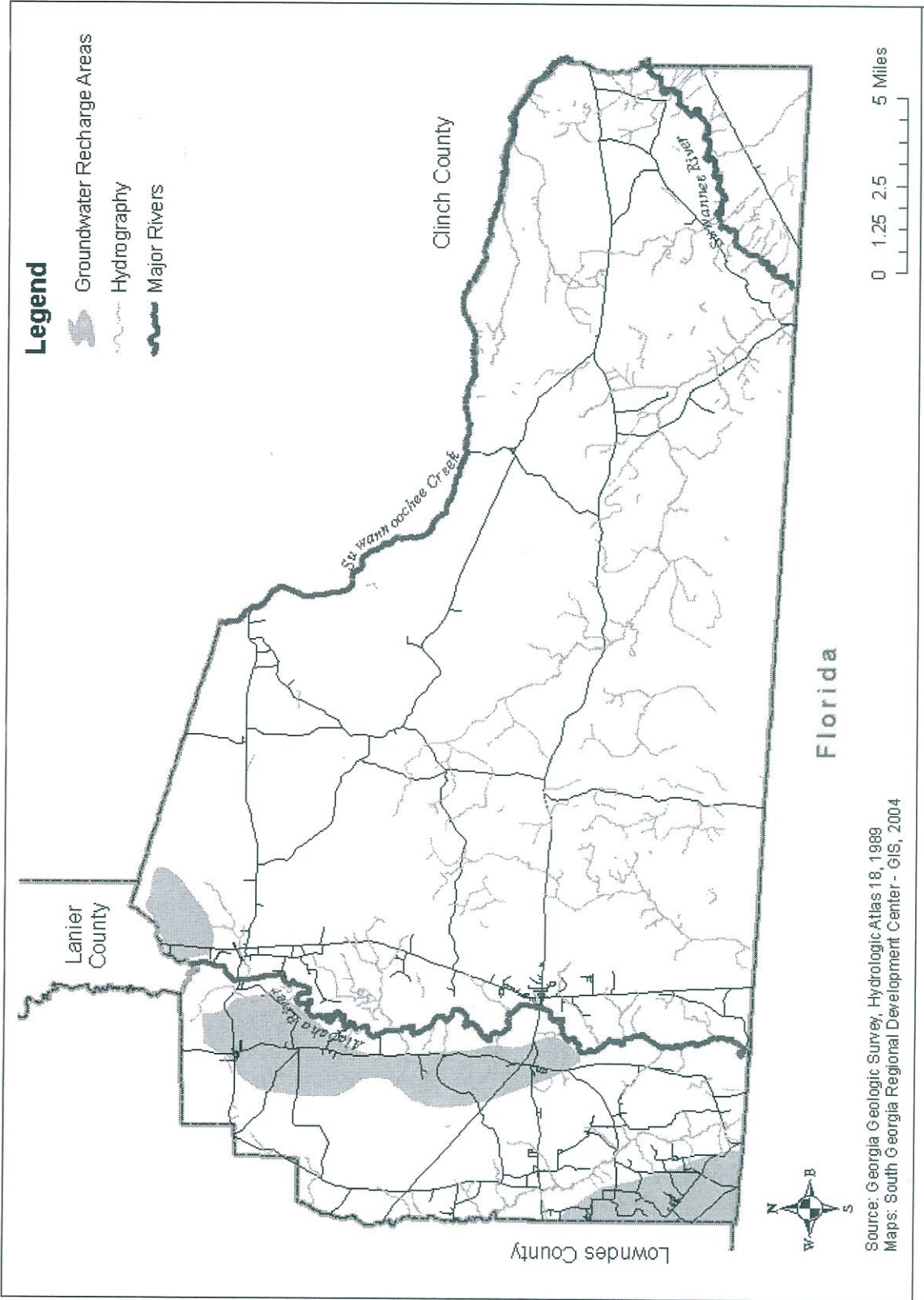
Not applicable.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE AREAS**

In 1989, the Georgia Planning Act encouraged each local government to develop a comprehensive plan to guide its activities. In order to provide the local governments with a guideline so that they could prepare their comprehensive plan, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) developed a set of minimum requirements that each local plan must meet known as the "Minimum Planning Standards." Part of the Minimum Planning Standards is the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria that specifically deal with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas and wetlands. River corridors and mountains were added through a separate act in 1991. In order for a comprehensive plan to meet the Minimum Planning Standards, it must identify whether any of these environmentally sensitive areas exist with the local government's jurisdiction and must prepare local regulations to protect the resources.

#### **GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS**

A groundwater recharge area is any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. Groundwater recharge areas can occur at any point where the aquifer updips to become closer to the surface allowing water from streams, sink holes, and ponds to permeate through more shallow ground into the aquifer. According to state geologic data, there are two groundwater recharge areas in Echols County. The first and most predominant groundwater recharge area is located directly east of the Alapaha River and runs parallel to the river. The second area is a small region located in the northern portion of the county.



**MAP 3-2 ECHOLS COUNTY  
 GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS**

Map 3-2 depicts the groundwater recharge areas within Echols County. All aquifer recharge areas are vulnerable to both urban and agricultural development. Pollutants from stormwater runoff and septic tanks in urban areas and excess pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural areas can access a groundwater aquifer more easily through these recharge areas. Once in the aquifer, pollutants can spread uncontrollably to other parts of the aquifer thereby decreasing or endangering water quality for an entire region. Therefore, development of any kind in these areas, including installation of septic tanks, should be restricted.

Echols County adopted the Groundwater Recharge Area Ordinance in 2002. The Groundwater Recharge Area polygons were provided by the Hydrologic Atlas 18, 1989 Edition "Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas of Georgia". Groundwater pollution susceptibility rating for Echols County is predominately "High" based on "Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility Map of Georgia", Hydrologic Atlas 20, 1992 Edition.

## **WETLANDS**

Freshwater wetlands are defined by federal law to be "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Wetlands generally include bogs, marshes, wet prairies, and swamps of all kinds. Under natural conditions, wetlands help maintain and enhance water quality by filtering out sediments and certain pollutants from adjacent land uses. They also store water, reduce the speed and magnitude of floodwaters, and serve as an important and viable habitat for plant and animal species.

Wetlands play an important role in mankind's environment and should be preserved for this purpose. A National Wetland Inventory (NWI) database for the geographic extent of Echols County has been constructed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and integrated into the county's Geographic Information System (GIS). Map 3-3 depicts the location of generalized wetland areas for Echols County. These exist along the floodplains of the major rivers but most are primarily in small pockets chained together by numerous small streams. Developing parcels that are within wetlands areas shown on Map 3-3, or suspected of having wetlands, should have a detailed wetlands survey and follow all applicable requirements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

Over the past several decades, expansion of both agricultural and urban development in Georgia has caused a steady reduction of wetlands acreage. This has resulted in the destruction of valuable plant and animal habitats, increased magnitude of floodwaters, and the removal of natural filters for surface water drainage thereby endangering water quality throughout many areas. To ensure the protection of the wetlands in Echols County, the county government adopted the Local Wetlands Policy Ordinance in 2002.

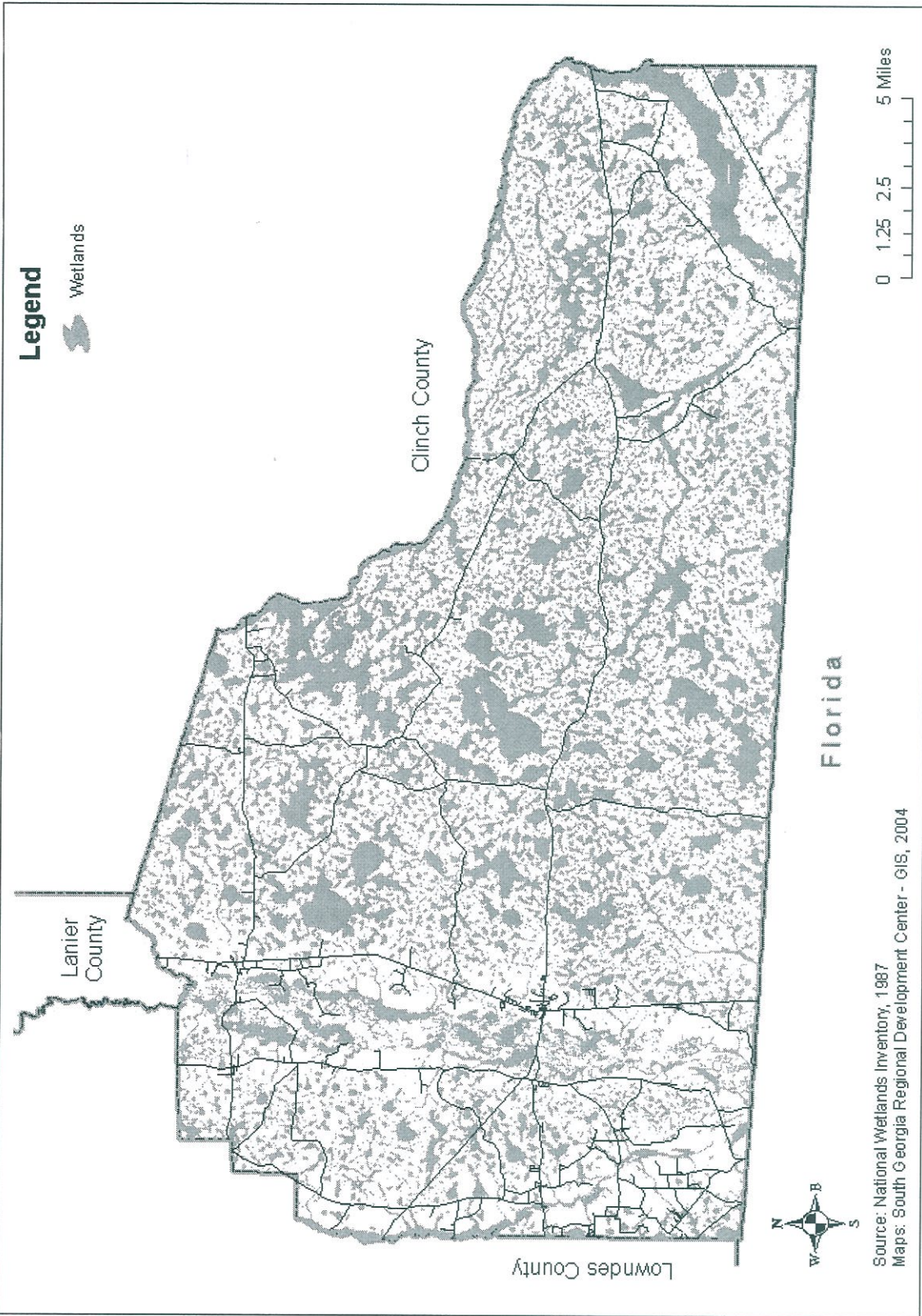
## **PROTECTED MOUNTAINS**

Not applicable.

## **PROTECTED RIVERS**

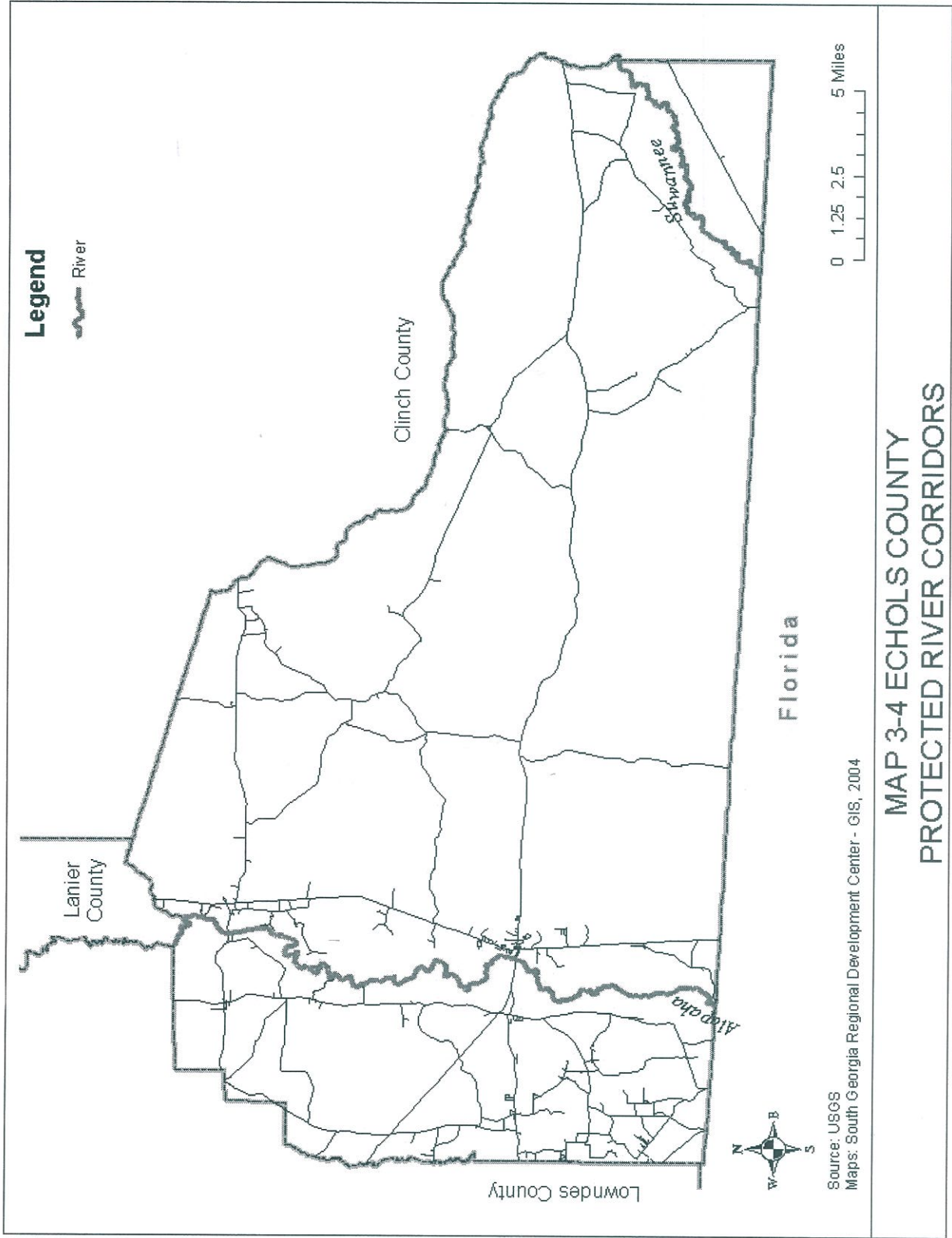
The Georgia General Assembly passed the "Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act" in 1991 which requests local governments to adopt corridor plans for certain designated rivers affecting or bordering their jurisdiction. In Echols County, this Act designated the Alapaha and Suwannee Rivers. Map 3-4 shows the protected river corridors within Echols County. When following the winding stream channels, the total length of the Alapaha River corridor is approximately 24.7 miles and the Suwannee River corridor is approximately 11.1 miles.

Under the Act, Echols County is required to adopt a "Corridor Protection Plan" for the Alapaha and Suwannee Rivers in accordance with the minimum criteria contained in the Act and as adopted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Except for a few railroad and highway bridges, fifteen residences and one sand mine,



**MAP 3-3 ECHOLS COUNTY  
 WETLANDS**





fieldsurveys indicate only natural (mostly riverine wetlands) vegetation associated with river floodplains to be located

within 100 feet of the river banks which is the state's minimum corridor width. Echols County reviewed the provisions of the Act and proposes implementation of its provisions by adoption of building codes, erosion and sedimentation control ordinances, a septic tank permitting program, and other appropriate ordinances. In 2002, Echols County adopted the Protected River Corridor Ordinance to further protect the river corridors.

### TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

In 1994, a lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court against the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) by the Sierra Club, Georgia Environmental Organization, Inc., Coosa River Basin Initiative Inc., Trout Unlimited, and Ogeechee River Valley Association for the failure to prepare Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), under provisions under the Clean Water Act, for the State of Georgia.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a river, stream or lake can receive and still be considered safe and healthy. A TMDL is a means for recommending controls need to meet water quality standards, which are set by the state and determine how much of a pollutant can be present in a waterbody. If the pollutant is over the set limit, a water quality violation has occurred. If a stream is polluted to the extent that there is a water quality standard violation, there cannot be any new additions (or “loadings”) of the pollutant to the stream until a TMDL is developed. Pollutants can come from point source and nonpoint source pollution. Examples of “pollutants” include, but are not limited to: Point Source Pollution- wastewater treatment plant discharges and Nonpoint Source Pollution- runoff from urban, agricultural, and forested area such as animal waste, litter, antifreeze, gasoline, motor oil, pesticides, metals, sediment; et al.

In August 2002, the SGRDC received and accepted a contract with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division (EPD) in the amount of \$87,500 to prepare 35 local Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans for stream segments that had been identified as impaired water bodies due to high fecal coliform (FC) and/or low dissolved oxygen (DO). The SGRDC also had to identify and advise local governments, stakeholders and any other interested parties of the water bodies within their jurisdictions, which have or will require the preparation and implementation of TMDLs and provide outreach and education to local/county governments, school systems, and citizens within the SGRDC region. Of the 35 TMDL Implementation Plans, only two (2) stream segments were located within Echols County, which were Toms Creek and Mud Creek<sup>1</sup>. Map 3-5 depicts the location of the impaired stream segments. Table 3-2 list the impaired waterbodies, impairment(s), and number of miles impacted:

**TABLE 3-2  
STREAM SEGMENTS WITH TMDL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOR 2002**

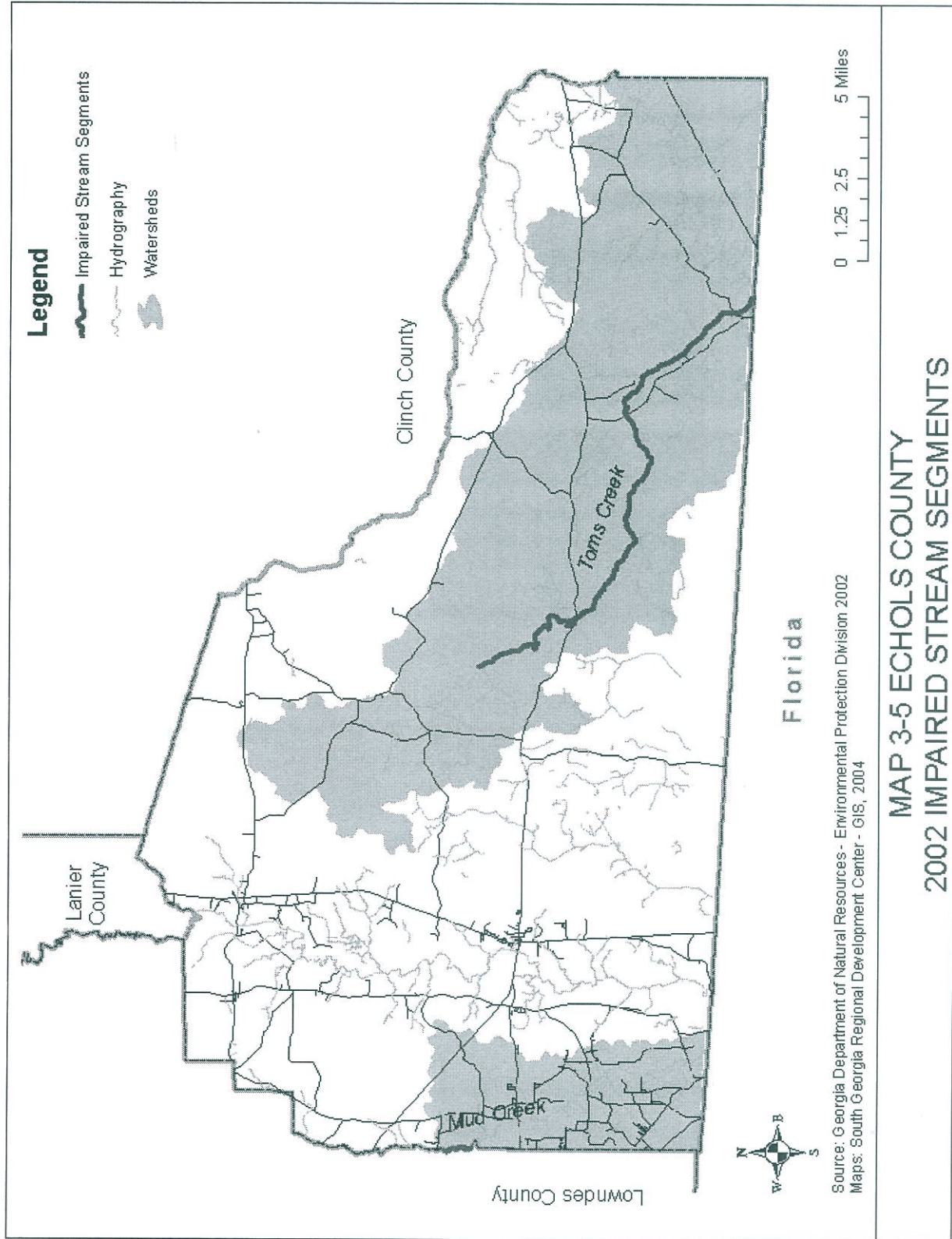
<b>Waterbody Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Impairment</b>	<b>Miles Impacted</b>
Toms Creek	Headwaters to Statenville	Echols	Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	23
Mud Creek	Downstream from Valdosta Mud Creek WPCP to Alapahoochee River	Lowndes and Echols	Fecal Coliform (FC)	10

Source: GA DNR EPD, 2002 Rivers/Streams Not Supporting Designated Uses.

### FLOODPLAINS

Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. The Federal

<sup>1</sup> The Alapahoochee River was listed for mercury (Hg) at the confluence of Mud and Grand Bay Cree to Statenville, but was delisted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.



Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has not yet prepared official flood area maps also known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Echols County. These FIRMs have been requested and will be implemented once they are received. Based on the county's topography and abundance of rivers and streams, flood hazards do exist in all parts of the county and these should be considered when making development decisions.

## **SOILS TYPES**

The USDA has not completed an official soil survey and map for Echols County. However, a 1996 report prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey reveals ten (10) major soil associations, and a general soil association map was developed as a result of the study by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. The soil survey map was constructed through the use of data such as geology, topography, vegetation, and climate information. The location of these soil associations are illustrated on Map 3-6 and a general description of each association is as follows:

**1. Fuquay-Leefield-Lakeland Association**

*These are somewhat poorly drained to excessively drained soils and tend to have a moderate permeability rate in the upper part of the subsoil and a moderately slow permeability rate in the lower part. These soils formed in the beds of loamy and sandy marine sediments and can be found on ridgetops and hillsides. Slopes range from 0 to 8 percent.*

**2. Leefield-Pelham-Irvington Association**

*These are poorly drained to moderately well drained soils and tend to have a moderate permeability rate in the upper part of the subsoil and moderately slow permeability rate in the lower part. These soils formed in thick beds of loamy and sandy marine sediments and can be found on broad flats, depressions, drainageways and low uplands. Slopes tend to range from 0 to 3 percent and are concave in some places. The natural vegetation consisted of mixed pines and hardwoods and an understory of gallberry and wiregrass. Some drainage is needed for safe cultivation during most years.*

**3. Leon-Chipley-Ellabelle Association**

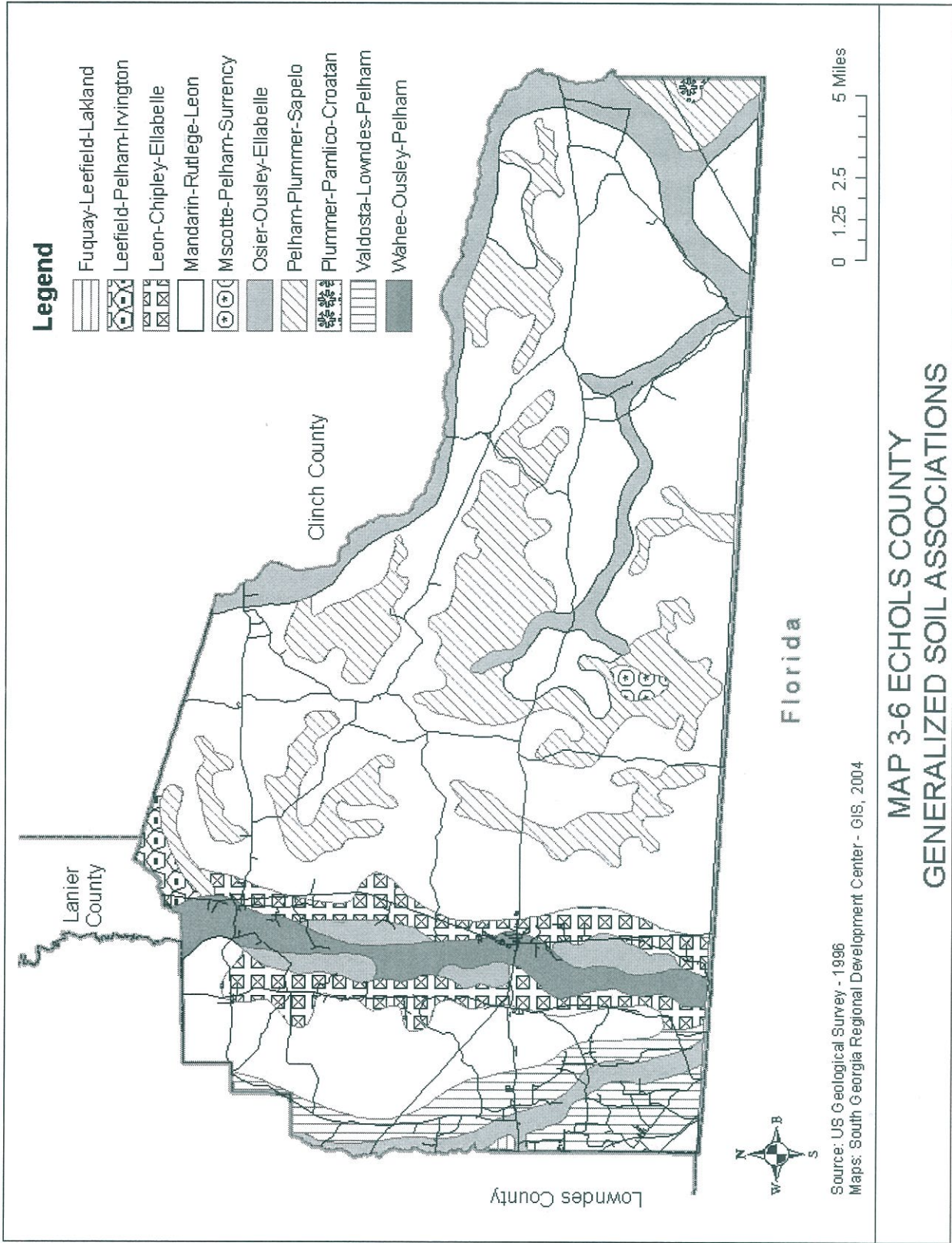
*These are very poorly to moderately well drained soils and tend to have poor to rapid permeability rate. These soils formed in the thick, sandy marine deposits and can be found on low flats of the lower Coastal Plain and in nearly level depressions, stream terraces, and broad wet flats. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. The native vegetation is longleaf pine, slash pine, and an understory of wiregrass and palmetto.*

**4. Mandarin-Rutlege-Leon Association**

*These are very poorly drained to moderately well drained soils and tend to have a rapid permeability rate. These soils formed in sandy and loamy marine sands in depression and on low flats and can be found on nearly level to gently sloping flat areas on the Coastal Plain. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. The flatwoods represent one of the most extensive groups of forest soils in the Coastal Plain. Flatwoods soils are found on nearly level to gently sloping flat areas. These soils tend to be high in organic-matter content and low in native fertility.*

**5. Mascotte-Pelham-Surrency Association**

*These are very poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained soils and tend to have a moderate permeability rate. These soils formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments and can be found on low flats, in depressions, drainageways, stream terraces, and broad wet flats. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. Wiregrass and pitcher plants, some hardwoods and fair to poor growth of pine occur natively on these soils, commonly referred to as wet savannas.*



**6. Osier-Ousley-Ellabelle Association**

*These are very poorly drained to moderately well drained soils and tend to have a rapid permeability rate. These soils formed in sandy sediments near streams and can be found on floodplains adjacent to the main stream channel, nearly level depressions, stream terraces, and broad wet flats. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. Wiregrass and pitcher plants, some hardwoods and fair to poor growth of pine occur natively on these soils, commonly referred to as wet savannas.*

**7. Pelham-Plummer-Sapelo Association**

*These are poorly drained to moderately well drained soils and tend to have a moderate permeability rate. These soils formed in unconsolidated sandy and loamy marine sediments and can be found on broad flats, in depressions, drainageways and nearly level to gently sloping flat areas. Slope ranges from 0 to 3 percent. The native vegetation consists of mixed hardwoods and pines. These soils are acidic, low in natural fertility, and contain little organic matter.*

**8. Plummer-Pamlico-Croatan Association**

*These are very poorly drained to poorly drained soils and tend to have a rapid permeability rate. These soils are found in isolated depressions throughout the savannas and flatwoods. Slopes range from 0 to 3 percent. The native vegetation consists of mixed hardwoods, pines, and cypress. These soils tend to be acidic and have organic soils referred to as peats, mucks, or bays.*

**9. Valdosta-Lowndes-Pelham Association**

*These are poorly drained to excessively drained soils and tend to have a moderate to rapid permeability rate. These soils are formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments and can be found on the sides and ridgetops of Coastal Plain uplands. Slopes range from 0 to 12 percent.*

**10. Wahee-Ousley-Pelham Association**

*These are poorly drained to moderately well drained soils and have a permeability rate that varies between slow and rapid. These soils are formed in loamy or clayey marine or sandy fluvial sediments and can be found on low stream terraces and flood plains. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent.*

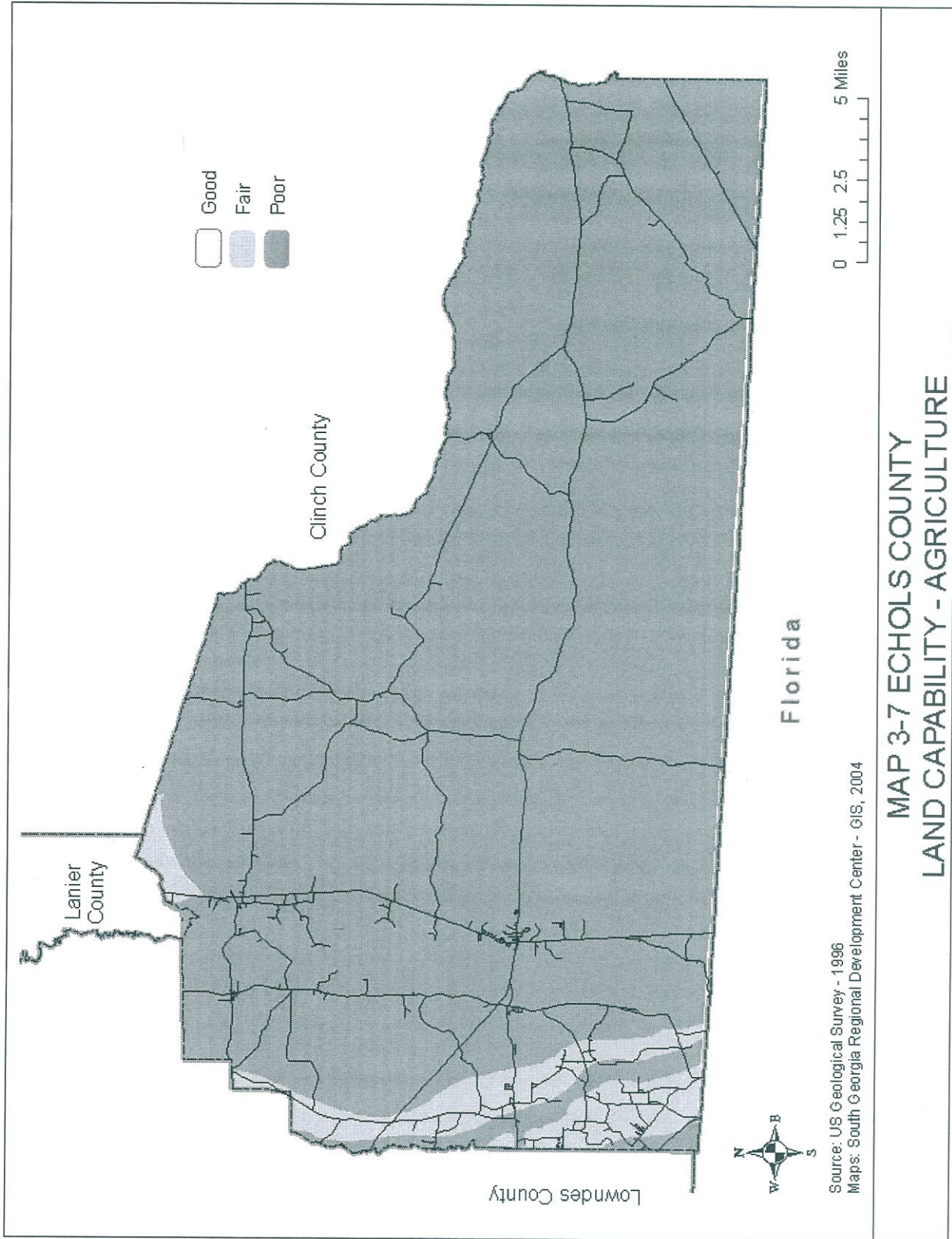
**STEEP SLOPES**

Not applicable.

**PRIME AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND**

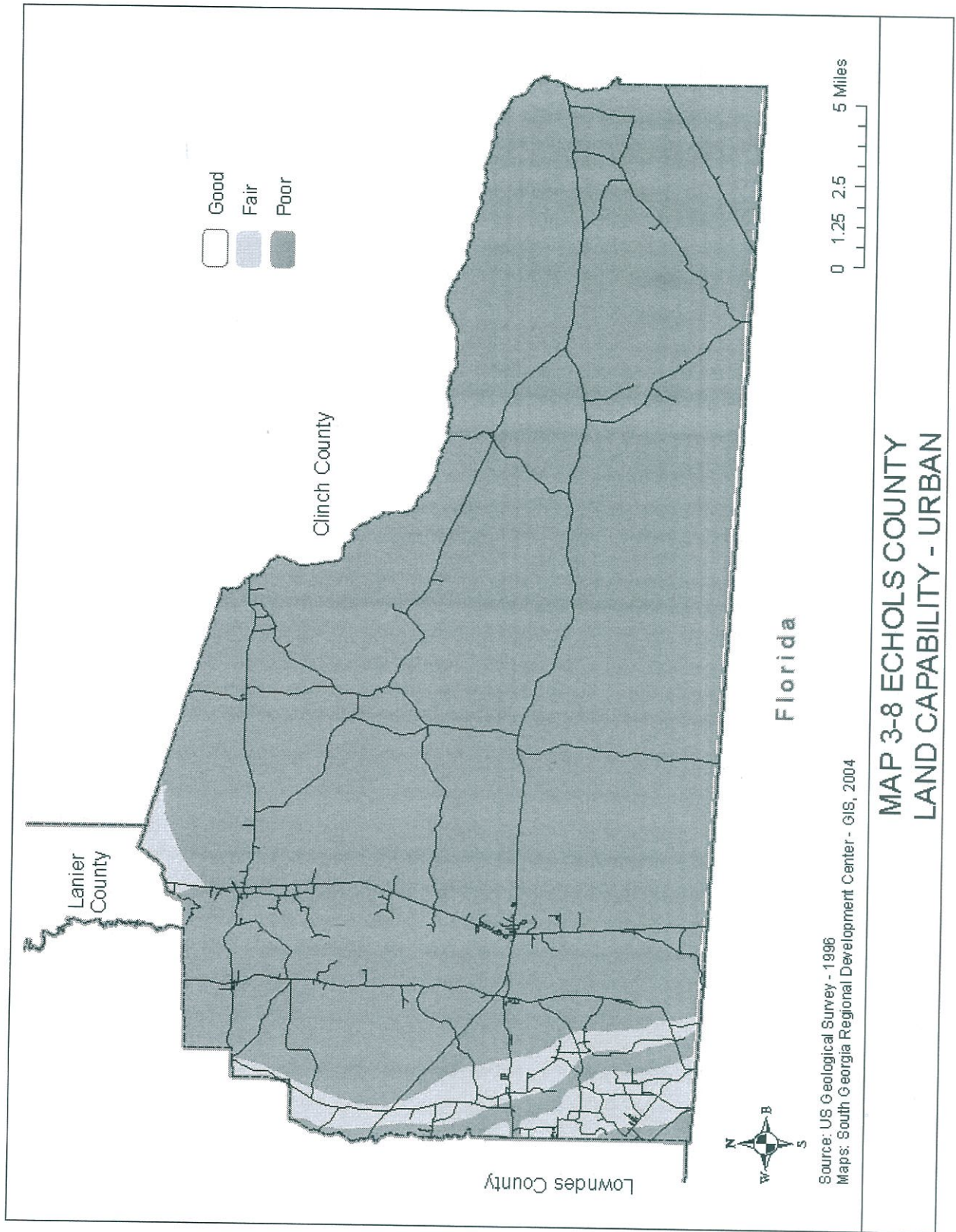
Without comprehensive soil data for Echols County, including maps of individual soil types, analysis of prime farmland soils and land capabilities for urban and agricultural development cannot be performed. However, the flat topography with large abundance of "wet" areas indicates that any form of urban or agricultural (cultivated) development is only limited to very small areas. It is apparent from the USGS topographic maps that higher land that is well-drained, and therefore more suitable for development, is relatively scarce in Echols County.

For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the ten soil associations have been arbitrarily classified in terms of land development capability for both agricultural and urban uses. Table 3-3 (next page) outlines the soil association classifications. The terms "good", "fair", and "poor" have been used to describe their relative capabilities. Agricultural yields per acre for major crops were used in determining agricultural capability. Limitations on building site development, roadways, and septic tank drainage fields were all used in determining urban capability. Map 3-7 depicts the county's land capability for agriculture, and Map 3-8 depicts the county's land capability for general urban development.



Source: US Geological Survey - 1996  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004

**MAP 3-7 ECHOLS COUNTY  
 LAND CAPABILITY - AGRICULTURE**





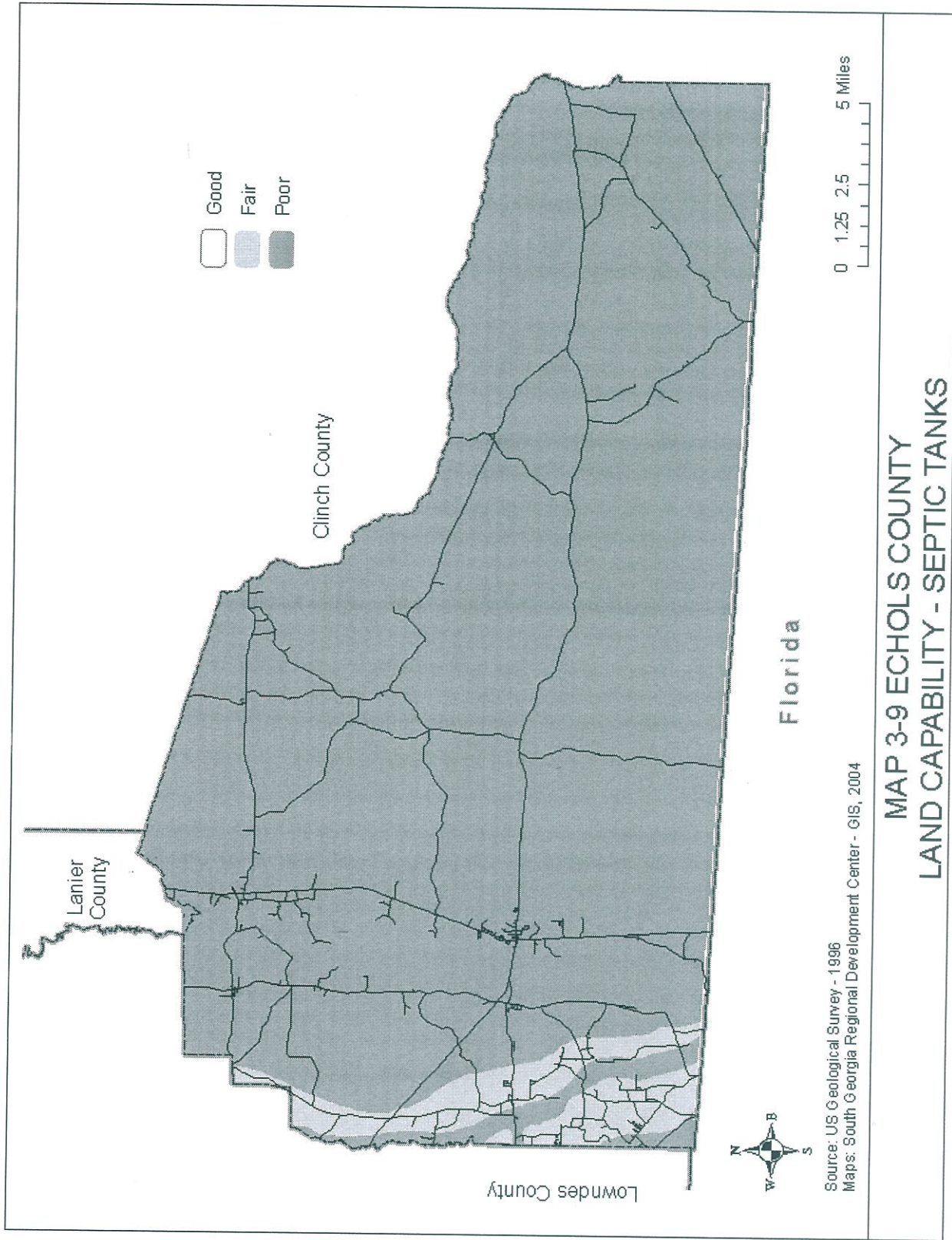
**TABLE 3-3**  
**SUMMARIZED LAND CAPABILITY FOR GREATER ECHOLS COUNTY**

{PRIVATE } Soil Type Association	Agricultural Uses			Urban Uses		
	Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor
Fuquay-Leefield-Lakeland**		X			X	
Leefield-Pelham-Irvington**		X			X	
Leon-Chipley-Ellabelle			X			X
Mandarin-Rutlege-Leon			X			X
Mascotte-Pelham-Surrency			X			X
Osier-Ousley-Ellabelle			X			X
Pelham-Plummer-Sapelo			X			X
Plummer-Pamlico-Croatan			X			X
Valdosta-Lowndes-Pelham		X			X	
Wahee-Ousley-Pelham**			X			X

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service – Soil Datamart Web site.

\*\* Capability rating does not include the Pelham portion of the associations. These wetter soils occur in drainage ways and depressional areas. Pelham soils are poorly suited to row crop agriculture and urban uses.

Table 3-4 (next page) outlines the soil association classifications in terms of land development capability for septic tank drainage fields only. The terms “good”, “fair”, and “poor” are also used to describe their relative capabilities. Map 3-9 depicts the county’s land capability for septic tank systems. In Echols County, there are no soil associations with a "good" rating for septic tank systems; two associations that have a “fair” rating; and eight associations that are rated "poor" and have severe limitations for septic tank systems. It is not impossible to construct a drain field on severely rated soils, but it will be expensive and the county should steer develop requiring such systems to more suitable locations. This analysis is based upon broad soil associations and provides an inconclusive evidence of the likelihood that a majority of the existing septic systems will have a high failure rate. Further studies are merited and the county sanitary code needs to be enforced.



**TABLE 3-4  
SUMMARIZED LAND CAPABILITY FOR SEPTIC TANKS**

Soil Type Association	Good	Fair	Poor
Fuquay-Leefield-Lakeland**		X	
Leefield-Pelham-Irvington**			X
Leon-Chipley-Ellabelle			X
Mandarin-Rutlege-Leon			X
Mascotte-Pelham-Surrency			X
Osier-Ousley-Ellabelle			X
Pelham-Plummer-Sapelo			X
Plummer-Pamlico-Croatan			X
Valdosta-Lowndes-Pelham		X	
Wahee-Ousley-Pelham**			X

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service – Soil Datamart Web site.

\*\* Capability rating does not include the Pelham portion of the associations. These wetter soils occur in drainage ways and depressional areas. Pelham soils are poorly suited to row crop agriculture and urban uses.

### **PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS**

Both the Georgia and U.S. Department of Natural Resources have inventoried plant and animal species in the State of Georgia. Table 3-5 (next page) depicts plants and animals that are on the "possible endangered" or "threatened" species lists for the State and Federal governments. Current local regulations should adequately protect habitats for these plant and animal species.

**TABLE 3-5  
ENDANGERED OR THREATENED PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES**

<b>SPECIES</b> Common Name – ( <i>Species Name</i> )	<b>GEORGIA</b> Threatened    Endangered		<b>FEDERAL</b> Endangered
<b>Plants</b>			
Florida Leadbush – <i>Amorpha herbacea</i> var. <i>floridana</i>	X		
Savanna Milkweed – <i>Asclepias pedicellata</i>	X		
Wild Indigo – <i>Baptisia lecontei</i> Leconte	X		
Green-fly Orchid – <i>Epidendrum conopseum</i>		X	
Southern Bog-button – <i>Lachnocaulon beyrichianum</i>	X		
Yellow Flytrap - <i>Sarracenia flava</i>		X	
<b>SPECIES</b> Common Name – ( <i>Species Name</i> )	<b>GEORGIA</b> Threatened    Endangered		<b>FEDERAL</b> Endangered
<b>Animals</b>			
Bannerfin Shiner – ( <i>Cyprinella leedsi</i> )	X		
Whitefin Shiner – ( <i>Cyprinella nivea</i> )	X		
Eastern Indigo Snake – ( <i>Drymarchon couperi</i> )		X	X
Golden Topminnow – ( <i>Fundulus chrysotus</i> )	X		
Suwannee Bass – ( <i>Micropterus notius</i> )		X	
Island Glass Lizard – ( <i>Ophisaurus compressus</i> )	X		
Suwannee River Cooter – ( <i>Pseudemys concinna suwanniensis</i> )	X		
Sailfin Shiner – ( <i>Pteronotropis hypselopterus</i> )	X		

Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program, 2004

## **MAJOR PARK, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AREAS**

There are no Federal or State-owned recreation or wildlife management areas within Echols County. There are, however, approximately 5 local parks (2 baseball/softball fields, 1 tennis court, 1 basketball court, and 1 playground). Efforts should be taken to maintain the current park inventory and possibly explore areas where parks and natural habitats could be incorporated into Echols County. To the east of Echols County is the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness Area. The Refuge was established in 1937 in order to preserve the 438,000-acre Okefenokee Swamp. Presently, the refuge encompasses approximately 396,000 acres. The swamp remains one of the oldest and most well preserved freshwater areas in America and extends 38 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west. The West Entrance to the Okefenokee is located 17 miles east of Fargo along Georgia State Highway 177 via the 82-acre Stephen C. Foster State Park. The Stephen C. Foster State Park is operated under a leasing agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Facilities include a museum; guided boat tours; boat, motor and canoe rentals; a campground; furnished cabins and extensive areas open to fishing. An entrance fee is charged. For additional information, please contact: Stephen C. Foster State Park Fargo, GA 31631 (912) 637-5274.

## **SCENIC VIEWS AND SITES**

See Cultural Resources Section.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL AND POLICIES**

### **GOAL:**

Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of natural resources in Echols County that could potentially be affected by growth and development (i.e. Floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, etc).

### **POLICY:**

All natural resources such as water resources, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and soil types that contribute to the current and future development of Echols County should be recognized and protected by appropriate county authorities. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Soil resources should be managed in a manner that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality.
- An adequate minimum flow and water quality should be maintained in all rivers and streams to ensure a productive fish habitat and protection of aquatic life and scenic qualities.

### **POLICY:**

State and/or Federal agency rules and regulations mandating local enforcement programs should be accompanied with adequate staff and financial assistance to help local units in their implementation programs. Examples include but are not limited to:

- These include rules and regulations on local floodplain management, erosion and sedimentation control, wetlands protection, river corridors, and similar laws designed to prevent degradation of the natural environment.
- Ongoing public awareness and education activities should also be developed to encourage participation in natural resource preservation and other related activities. Agencies that currently offer education material on the conservation and protection of natural resources are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Georgia

Department of Natural Resources Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), etc.

#### **POLICY:**

Appropriate funding source should be identified and utilized to encourage the continual use and protection of significant natural resources. Examples include but are not limited to:

- State and Federal natural resource programs such as the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (GA DNR EPD), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) are examples of funding sources that should be utilized to maintain and preserve all of the county's natural resources.

#### **POLICY:**

Special planning activities should be conducted to encourage sensible development that will enhance and protect all of the county's natural resources. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Development should not pollute, exhaust or interfere with the natural replenishment cycles of groundwater.
- Development should not grossly impair the function of vital natural systems.
- Land use should be primarily determined by natural characteristics, suitability of the land, and the availability of urban services.
- Lands that are not suitable for on-site absorption systems should not be subdivided/developed unless public sewers are available or other provisions are made for the handling of sewage.
- Treatment facilities should be available for the discharge of septic tank, holding tank, and recreational vehicle pumpage.
- Land management practices that minimize siltation and pollution should be utilized. These practices include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Approval of grading, filling, and excavation plans by the cities and county to ensure that erosion and siltation are minimized. (I.e. sodding, seeding, re-vegetation schedules, etc).
  - (b) Provide and maintain strategically located settling basins to remove silt and debris from surface water runoff.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The conservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological resources can have positive impacts on Echols County's visual appeal, tourism potential, downtown revitalization, and overall economic development potential. In addition, the preservation of historic properties and landscapes is an important aspect of maintaining a community's sense of place and pride. Continued interest in local heritage is essential in retaining a community vision with an understanding of its past.

### **HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ECHOLS COUNTY**

Echols County is located in the Coastal Plains of South Georgia. The land is generally flat with little relief and contains many wetlands. Before the settlement of the white man, this land was covered with virgin timber. Pines and hardwoods such as oaks were the major trees growing in the region. Deer, turkeys, rabbits and fish were

plentiful in addition to the many other huntable animals.

The land, which makes up Echols County today, was taken from Lowndes and Clinch counties. Back in 1858, the Georgia General Assembly created Echols County. The county was named for Robert M. Echols who served in the Georgia General Assembly for 24 years as president of the state senate. Echols died while serving as brigadier general in the Mexican War.

Originally known as Troublesome, Statenville was chosen to be the site of the courthouse and jail. In 1859 after the elections of the first county officers, plans for the first courthouse and jail were made. The first courthouse simple in structure, was one-story high and had two main entrances. The jail was a small log structure that measured ten feet by twelve feet. It was partitioned in the center forming two cells. In 1876, both the jail and the courthouse burned. Similar results occurred with the subsequent courthouse and jail when it too burned in 1879. The fire destroyed all previous records of the county and surrounding areas. The third courthouse, which included a fireproof vault, was a two-story wooden structure with offices on the first floor and a courtroom on the top floor. This courthouse remained in service for many years until 1957 when it was torn down to build the modern courthouse still used today.

Although Echols County was created in 1858, the history of the area, which makes up Echols County, goes back much further than the time when the county was created. Back in the mid 1500's, the Spanish arrived in the new world. They moved into the area now known as South Georgia. They occupied the area for approximately 100 years before the English and the French began to quarrel over North America. These quarrels with each other and with the Indians continued for many years. By 1733 when Oglethorpe and his settlers arrived on the coast of Georgia the Indians were fighting the Europeans to keep their land. The arrival of the settlers did nothing but aggravate the already intense situation. In the early 1800's, General Andrew Jackson began driving the Indians from South Georgia and taking the land from them. The cession of the land from the Creek Indians made possible the formation of the counties in South Georgia that we know today. The land was ceded in 1814, but no counties were laid out until 1819.

By 1820, the land that was ceded from the Indians in what is now South Georgia was surveyed and mapped. The three counties that were first laid out in this area are: Early, Irwin and Appling. Lowndes County was created out of land taken from Irwin County. Echols County is partially made up of land that was taken from Lowndes County.

With vast acres of forested land and fertile soil in the county, farming and the timber industry played an instrumental role in the development of Statenville, Howell, Haylow, Mayday and other communities. Although the timber industry and farming provided the majority of the economic base in Echols County, according to an 1870 census, there were four cotton gins, ten gristmills, and one buggy manufacturer. With the creation of the highway and later Interstate, many of Echols County's small towns fell into oblivion. Traces of these small towns remain evident and are revealed by clusters of historic buildings, scattered homesteads, and scenic vistas.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the area today known as Echols gained more and more residents. Some of the mostly forested land was cleared for farming and some was kept in pines and used for gum gathering to make turpentine. Farming, however, has been very important to the development of the county. In the 1870 census, there was 4,395 acres of corn. Also, there were four cotton gins, ten gristmills and one buggy manufacturer. More recently, tobacco, corn, peanuts, pastures for cattle grazing and hogs represent the a large part of the farmers' income today.

The timber industry has also played an important role in the development of the economy of Echols County. The southern pine provided landowners with raw materials such as gum, saw logs, pole, piling, pulpwood and fence posts. These raw materials were then sold to processing facilities outside the county. However, turpentine distilling was one of the most important industries in Echols County since the War Between the States. By around 1920, the turpentine industry had reached its peak in the county but it continued until about 1950. Mayday, in the northern portion of the county, was a typical turpentine community. Generally, a turpentine community would consist of the turpentine worker's quarters, the company's office, the commissary and the distilling sheds. Today, there is no turpentine-distilling going on in the county, but much of the county is still grown in trees for the purposes of timber products.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES**

An initial inventory of historic resources was conducted. This inventory is a basis for a comprehensive survey and should assist in planning for new development, as well as determining areas for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places or the development of local historic districts.

## **INVENTORY OF RESOURCE TYPES**

### **Residential**

Concentrations of historic resources exist throughout Echols County. However, Statenville and Howell have significantly more resources than any other unincorporated area within the county.

#### *Statenville*

Currently the largest community in Echols County, Statenville contains several historic residential properties that were built between 1880-1930. Without any definitive style or detail, the majority of historic buildings in Statenville are of the vernacular type. Map 3-11 provides the locations of all historic resources in Statenville.

#### *Howell*

Having prospered during its proximity to the railroad, Howell contains the largest grouping of historic buildings in Echols County. The majority of residential properties were built between 1880-1930 and are vernacular in form. Map 3-12 depicts the historic resources found in Howell.

### **Commercial**

#### *Statenville*

Statenville contains a small grouping of historic commercial structures. Located at the intersection of US Highway 129 and Highway 94, the commercial structures were built between 1890 and 1920. Map 3-12 shows the historic resources found in Statenville.

#### *Howell*

The small community of Howell stills retains a handful of historic commercial structures. Although the majority of these buildings are vacant and becoming derelict, they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The commercial buildings, including the Historic Masonic Lodge were built between 1890 and 1920. Map 3-3 provides the historic resources found in Howell.

### **Institutional**

The Regional Historic Rural Schools Initiative has identified one existing historic school building in Echols County as depicted on Map 3-10 and Map 3-11. While a majority of the historic church buildings have been lost, a handful still exists. Refer to Map 3-10 for locations of churches in the unincorporated areas.

The Statenville Consolidated School, located in Statenville, is on the National Register of Historic Places.



## **Transportation-Related**

Remnants of the former Georgia and Florida Railway and the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railroad exist in Echols County. Many small settlements that once thrived from the railroad remain evident. Individual residential buildings were constructed to front the tracks, most likely due to the fact that the trains were the most dependable form of transportation. Although the majority of the original lines have been removed, patterns of development that surrounded the lines are clearly visible and provide scenic vistas.

### Agricultural

Agricultural sites are patterns in the land and the related structures created by human activity. Although no landscapes appear exactly as they did in the past, they often retain significant characteristics. Agricultural sites in Echols County typically have the following aspects: individual buildings for separate functions (dwelling, smokehouse, livestock barns, equipment buildings, etc.); paths for access, frequently shaded by trees; and fields that are irregularly arranged and follow natural topography. Echols County's agricultural resources are extensive and include numerous types of buildings and landscapes.

### Archaeological Sites

The earliest known human inhabitants of the region now known as Echols County came into the area approximately ten thousand years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age. European settlers began to enter the area in the early nineteenth century and were probably somewhat established in present-day Echols County by the time the land was officially ceded by the Creek and Seminole Indians in 1814. Over the last ten thousand years, humans have left a substantial material record of their lives. The study of this material record forms the basis of archaeology and the basic unit of this record is the archaeological site.

To date, there have been only one site recorded in Echols County; however, this likely reflects a lack of archaeological research, not a lack of sites. Archaeological sites in Echols County range from locations where hunters manufactured stone tools 10,000 years ago to small late nineteenth/early twentieth century farmsteads.

Archaeological sites, like historic buildings, are considered cultural resources. However, unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites are not always evident to the untrained eye. While some archaeological sites have obvious above ground indicators such as earth mounds, or chimney remnants, most consist of artifacts (objects made or modified by humans such as stone tools, pottery, and bottle glass) and features (post holes, trash pits, stone hearths, human burials, etc.) that are underground.

The only sure way to know if an archaeological site exists is to have a professional archaeologist sample or survey the area. However, there are some general criteria you can apply to help prioritize areas. Prehistoric (Indian) sites are most commonly located near water sources such as streams, springs, or lime sinks. Historic (Euro/Afro-American) sites are commonly located close to old/historic roads. Both prehistoric and historic sites are generally located on level to gently sloping ground and on well-drained soils. Previous disturbance can also affect a location's potential to contain archaeological sites. For example, road or utility right-of-ways have usually been subjected to heavy disturbance and are not likely to contain any intact archaeological deposits. Cultivation, however, does not necessarily destroy archaeological sites and does not, by itself, indicate a low potential area. Such criteria, even when developed into a formal predictive model, should only be used as a tool at the most basic planning level. Hiring a professional archaeologist/consultant is an effective way of streamlining the compliance process and insuring that archaeological resources are being treated according to the law.

While cultural resources work is most often done in response to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), meaning that there is some federal involvement (i.e. federal funds, permits, etc.), it is important to remember that there are also state laws to consider. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 states

that a person who is not operating under Section 106 of the NHPA must have written landowner permission to conduct archaeology on private property and must provide written notification to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at least five (5) business days prior to excavation. Other code sections apply more generally to human remains, but are relevant because of the possibility of discovering such remains at archaeological sites. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon the disturbance of human remains. If law enforcement determines that it is not a crime scene, DNR is notified of the discovery.

Key points to remember when considering archaeology in development and compliance:

- Humans have been in the area now known as Echols County for at least 10,000 years, so the potential for finding evidence of past human activity (i.e., archaeological sites) is generally high.
- Unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites often have no above ground components that would indicate their presence.
- While factors such as distance to water and/or old roads, slope, soil drainage, and previous disturbance can help prioritize areas of archaeological concern, the only sure way to know whether an area contains archaeological sites is to conduct an archaeological survey.
- Most archaeology is done in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and regulations implementing that act (36 CFR Part 800). These laws insure that projects receiving federal funds (CDBG/EIP grants, FDIC loans, etc) or requiring federal permits (e.g., Section 404 of Clean Water Act) take affects to archaeological resources into account.
- In addition to federal laws, there are state laws to consider as well. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 requires written landowner permission and DNR notification of intent to conduct non-Section 106 archaeology on private property. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon discovery or disturbance of human remains.

Other

Cemeteries are irreplaceable resources and are in need of preservation within Echols County. Map 3-10 depicts the locations of all historic cemeteries in Echols County. These cemeteries range from small family plots and slightly larger church graveyards, to sizable city cemeteries.

## ***ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS***

Today, Echols County remains rich with natural resources in addition to many cultural, historic, and archaeological resources. Map 3-10 depicts an initial inventory of resources in the unincorporated areas but it should be noted that a comprehensive survey of all cultural, historic, and archaeological resources is necessary.

Conservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological resources should begin with a comprehensive countywide survey. At this point, a partial inventory has been done, but it is incomplete. Funding is available through the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to assist with the completion of a Historic Resources Survey.

Although Statenville has listed a property on the National Register of Historic Places, there are additional buildings that can be designated. Map 3-11 illustrates potential buildings and districts that can be nominated in the future. Furthermore, there is an abundant amount of historic buildings in Howell and other incorporated areas that are worthy of designation. The National Register of Historic Places not only identifies significant properties and districts for general planning purposes, but it qualifies certain properties eligible to receive specific federal and state tax incentives for private property owners to rehabilitate historic buildings. The National Register also makes available historic preservation grants to assist local governments in accomplishing preservation projects.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### GOAL:

Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of cultural resources in greater Echols County.

### POLICY:

Individual cultural resources, historic districts, and historic communities that contributed to the evolution and development of Echols County should be formally identified and designated by appropriate city and county authorities. Encourage new programs that promote designated properties and support the creation of historic property owners associations.

### POLICY:

An ongoing public awareness and education program, such as the Georgia Trust's Heritage Education Program, should be developed to encourage participation in historic preservation and cultural activities.

### POLICY:

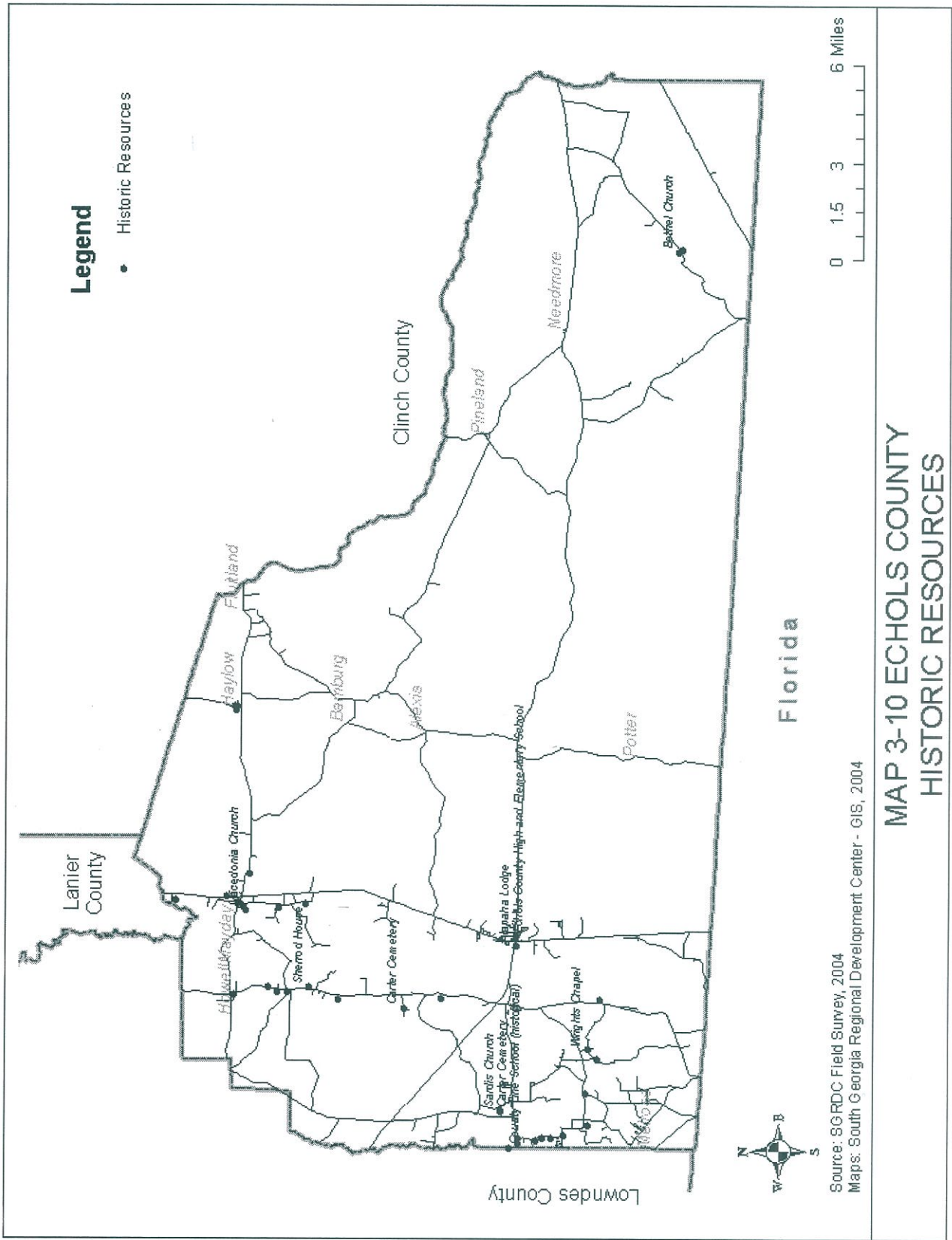
Appropriate funding sources should be identified and utilized to encourage the continual use and rehabilitation of significant cultural and historic resources. State and Federal historic preservation programs include Georgia Historic Resource Survey Funding, Georgia Heritage Grants, Historic Preservation Fund Grant, OneGeorgia Authority Grants, Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program, Historic Landscape and Garden Grant Program, Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program, Community Development Block Grant, and the Quality Growth Grant Program.

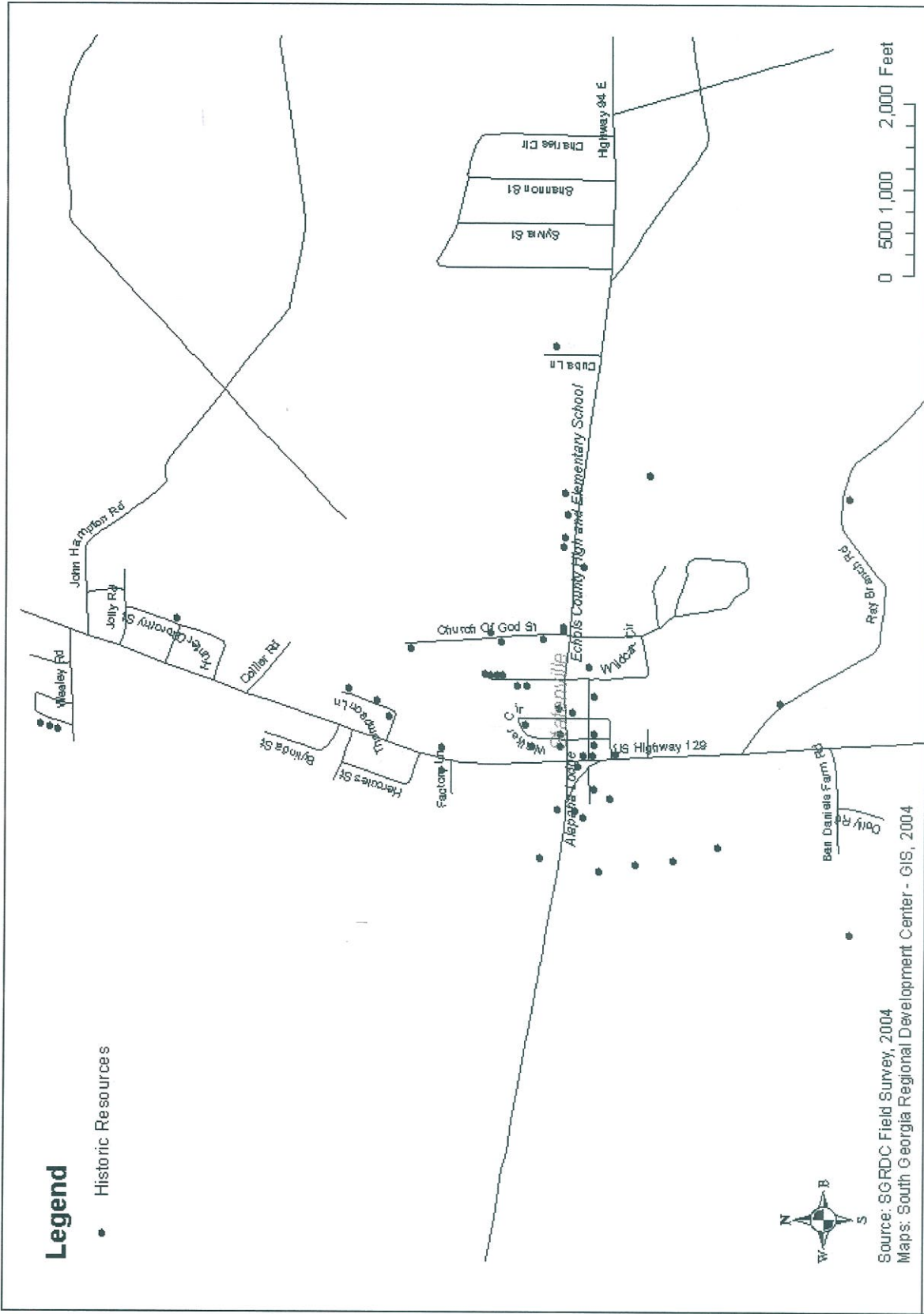
### POLICY:

Special planning activities should be conducted to encourage sensible development that will enhance and protect the county's cultural, historic, and archeological resources.

### POLICY:

Encourage elected and appointed officials to be supportive of preservation in their decision-making. Develop and implement educational materials for new officials and routinely seek outside professional advice regarding preservation.





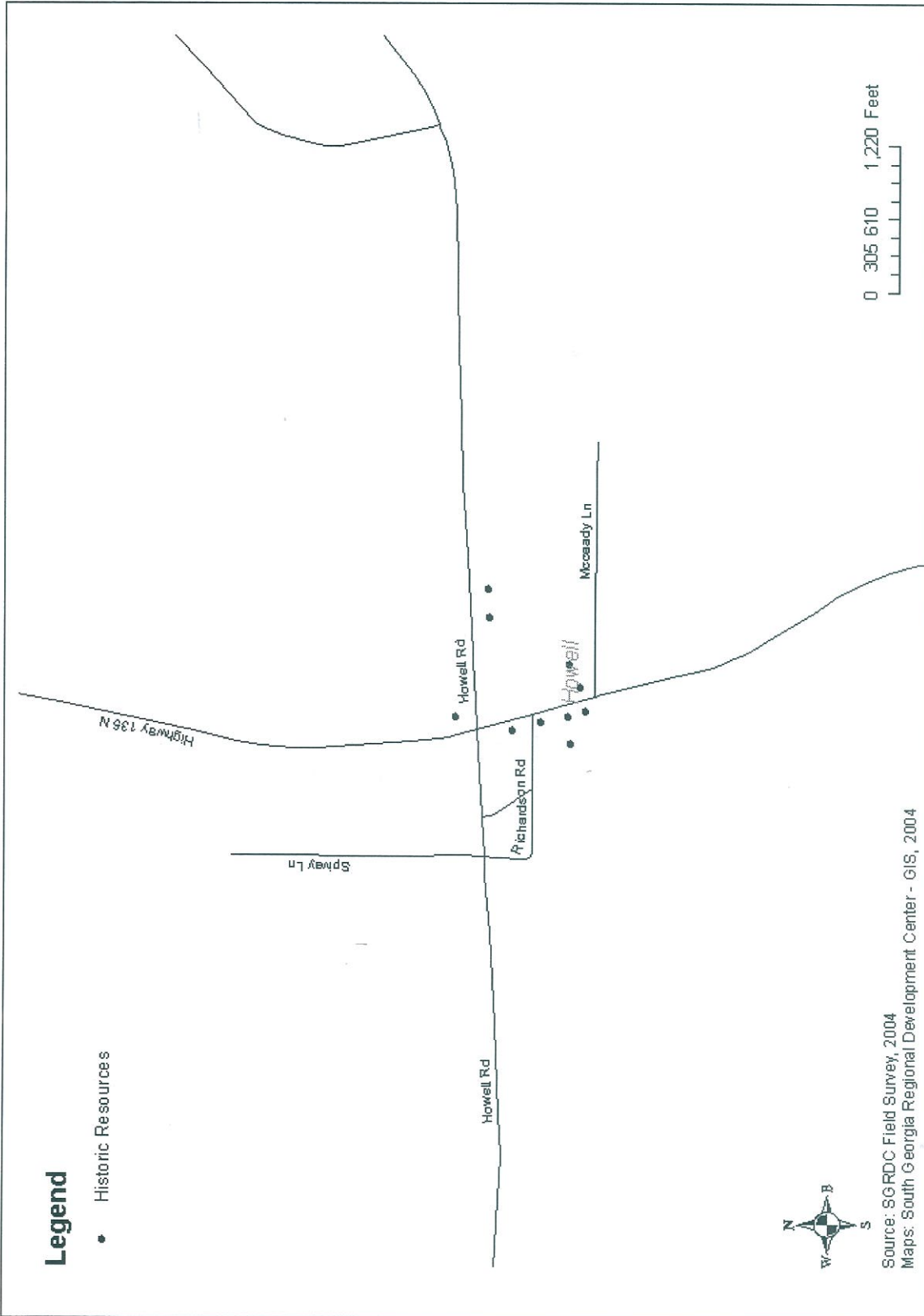
**MAP 3-11 STATENVILLE AREA  
HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**Legend**

- Historic Resources



Source: SGRDC Field Survey, 2004  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004



Source: SGRDC Field Survey, 2004  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004

**MAP 3-12 HOWELL AREA  
 HISTORIC RESOURCES**

## **CHAPTER FOUR: COUNTY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The location and quality of the facilities and services provided by Echols County are as important to the county as its industries, farms, commercial and residential areas. The facilities and services not only enhance the well being of the area's residents, but along with the quality of shopping facilities and housing, largely determine the "livability" of the city and the county.

County facilities and services as defined herein are those facilities, usually public or semi-public in nature, which primarily serve residents with such services as schools, recreation, administrative offices, library, hospital, water and sewer system, solid waste system, police and fire protection, and general government. The various facilities and services discussed in this chapter are analyzed in relation to such factors as location, condition, capacity, present demands and future needs. The individual location of these facilities is shown on Map 4-1. (Echols County does not have any incorporated cities)

### **COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL SERVICE BUILDINGS**

#### **Echols County Courthouse**

The present Echols County Courthouse is their third structure and was constructed in 1956. It is located at 110 State Route 94 East in the center of Statenville. This one-story 8,742 square foot brick structure has twelve employees and contains offices for the County Clerk, County Commission, Tax Commissioner, Tax Assessor, Probate and Magistrate Court Justices, and Emergency Management Agency/Voter Registration Director

Since 1995, minor renovations including new entrance sidewalks, new lighting, carpeting and floor tile and re-painting the interior have been completed. Continual renovations will be undertaken in the next five years. Some records are kept in filing cabinets in the County Roads Maintenance Shop and the former fire station located two blocks from the Courthouse. With some minor improvements the Echols County Courthouse should adequately serve the county throughout the twenty-year planning period.

#### **Echols County Road Department**

The Echols County Road Department is located two blocks south of the Courthouse on a one acre tract of land. The County Maintenance Shop is a 2,850 square foot structure constructed to house equipment and vehicles and conduct maintenance and repairs. This structure houses the Road Superintendent's office in one corner, and is in good overall condition. There is a fenced in storage area for vehicles and supplies. The building and storage area are well maintained and very orderly. Echols County has ten employees who maintain the county road system. This facility with normal maintenance and upkeep will adequately serve the county throughout the twenty year planning period.

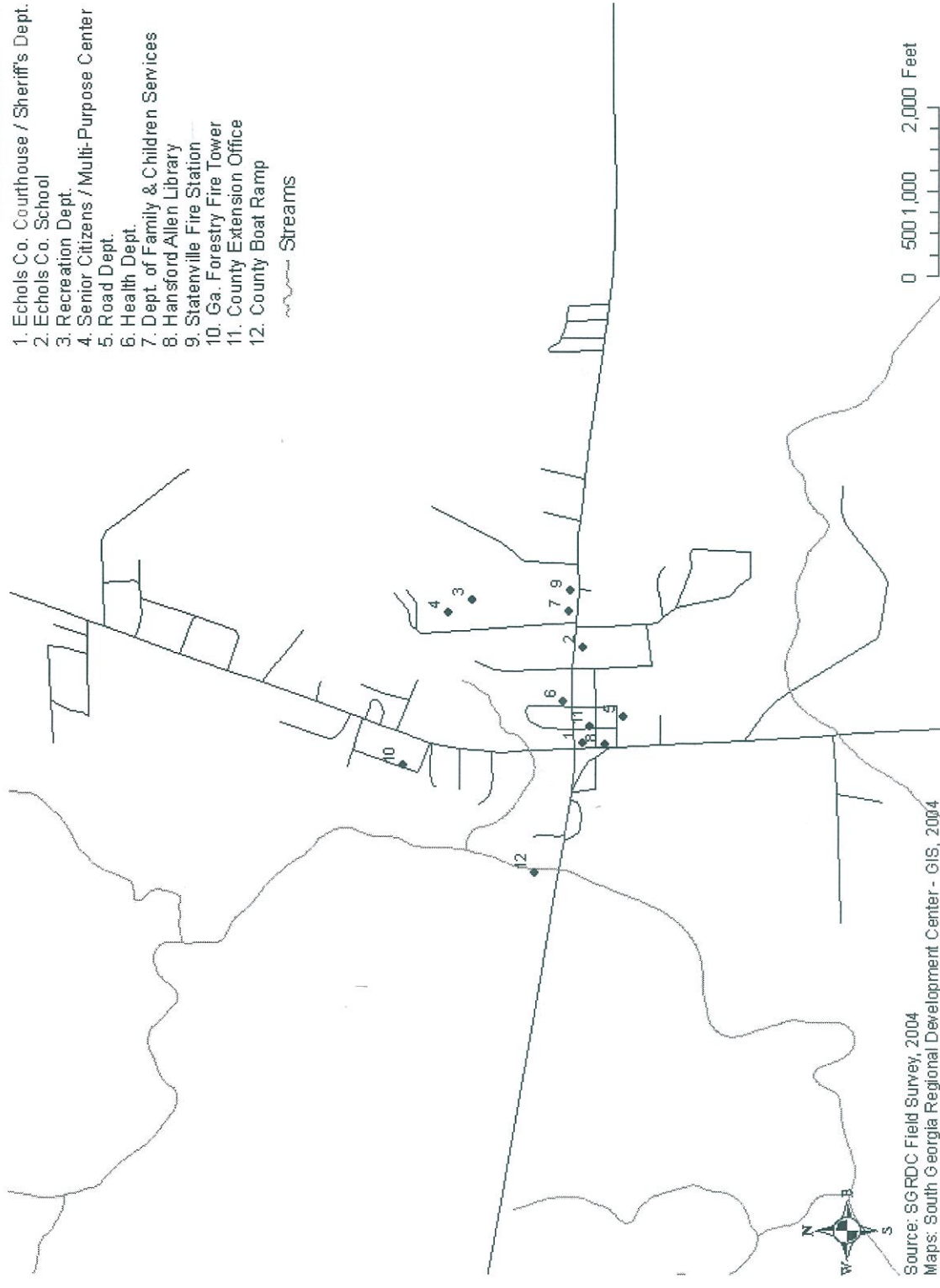
#### **Echols County Extension Office**

The Echols County Agent's office and the 4-H office are combined in one structure across the street and east of the Courthouse. This one-story, county owned, structure was remodeled and added to in 1993. The three employees now accommodate a 1,480 square foot structure that has a large meeting room in its rear. The most recent improvements corrected all previous deficiencies, so with normal maintenance this structure will be adequate throughout the twenty-year planning period.

#### **Senior Citizens/Multi-Purpose Center**

In July of 1995, Echols County opened their Senior Citizens/Multi-Purpose Center, which is a 6,500 square foot structure, costing \$435,000 and located adjacent to the Echols County ball fields and recreation center. A single activity Public Facilities Community Development Block grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

1. Echols Co. Courthouse / Sheriff's Dept.
  2. Echols Co. School
  3. Recreation Dept.
  4. Senior Citizens / Multi-Purpose Center
  5. Road Dept.
  6. Health Dept.
  7. Dept. of Family & Children Services
  8. Hansford Allen Library
  9. Statenville Fire Station
  10. Ga. Forestry Fire Tower
  11. County Extension Office
  12. County Boat Ramp
- Streams



Source: SGRDC Field Survey, 2004  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004

## MAP 4-1 ECHOLS COUNTY FACILITIES & SERVICES



made it possible to construct this senior citizens/multi-purpose center. This building houses programs and activities for senior citizens and implements county service programs for low/moderate income citizens. The following programs will be made available: Low-income Energy Assistance; Brown Bag Food Program (ELF); McKinley Homeless Program; Housing Counseling; Bookmobile Service and deposit; Health Screenings and other health programs; Cooperative Extension Programs; Educational Programs; Nutrition Education; Long-Term Care Ombudsman; GEM Program; Senior Community Service Employment Program, the Coastal Plains Office of Economic Opportunity-Weatherization Program, and the Community Services Coordinator. This facility will serve the county throughout the twenty-year planning period.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Echols County Sheriff**

The Sheriff's Department is responsible for law enforcement services county-wide, a 424.6 square mile area. The Sheriff's Department consists of the Sheriff and four regular patrol deputies, and one dispatcher/secretary. Administration is located to the rear of the Echols County Courthouse complex. This structure, was constructed in 1985, is a brick building with 1,765 square feet and has adequate space and facilities for all personnel and will serve the County throughout the twenty-year planning period.

The Sheriff's Department utilizes five vehicles for roadway patrol, surveillance, and investigations. The Department receives an average of 150 calls per month. Echols County participates in an area-wide drug squad with Atkinson, Clinch, Berrien, Cook and Lanier Counties, and coordinates services with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia State Patrol.

The Sheriff's Department building has a two-cell jail, but not the manpower to operate it, so they contract for services at the Lowndes County Jail located in Valdosta and Clinch County Jail in Homerville. Echols County maintains 24-hour coverage countywide with at least one officer on duty. There is a half an hour response time when the duty officer is on the eastern side of the county and he is called to the western side.

According to the U.S. Justice Department and the International City Management Association standards, there should be at least 2.7 sworn certified officers per 1,000 population. This means that in Echols County there should be a total of 9.9 officers. Echols County has five regular patrol officers including the Sheriff, so the Department is five officers short of this standard.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

Echols County supports four volunteer fire departments, which operate out of four fire stations located as follows: FS #1- Statenville; FS #2 Coggins Farm & Produce; FS #3-May Day Fielding Road; and FS #4-Tarver Will Rewis Road. Map 4-2 show the fire station locations and the approximate service areas. Since 1995, Echols County has replaced two fire stations; built two new fire stations, and added/replaced vehicles from three to seven. The outcome of these additions is a major reduction in service area gaps. The Georgia Forestry Commission has a fire station and fire tower located in Statenville, which has jurisdiction for grass and forest fires (not structural) throughout Echols County.

The Volunteer Fire Departments within Echols County have matched local dollars with grant dollars, which were coordinated with Echols County to gain used, re-conditioned Georgia Forestry Commission "fireknocker" vehicles. The fireknocker is a first response vehicle with 750 to 1,250 gallons of water, but neither the pumping capacity nor the volume of water normally required to handle a major structural fire. The Commission leases the water tanks on the fireknockers to Echols County for fifty year intervals. The volunteer fire department can use the fireknocker for all its fires, but they are obligated to send the fireknocker to assist in all grass and forest fire calls within a rural fire protection service area, which usually covers an area within five miles of the fire station.

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) rates each fire department's capability to fight fires and their rating (from 1 to 10 with 1 being the best and 10 the worst) determines a public protection classification, which may be used to develop

advisory property insurance premium calculations. The individual homeowner, business, industrial, and public domain property owners are well advised to understand the ISO rating for the area in which they reside. Insurance premiums can drop as much as 10 percent by an ISO rating class change of one step. The ISO rating is based on several factors, including manpower, training, equipment, location of fire stations, availability of water in fire hydrants, and pumping capacity, to name a few. Table 4-1 shows the breakdown by fire department, major vehicles, manpower, ownership and ISO rating.

**TABLE 4-1  
ECHOLS COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS, EQUIPMENT,  
VOLUNTEERS, OWNERSHIP, AND ISO RATING**

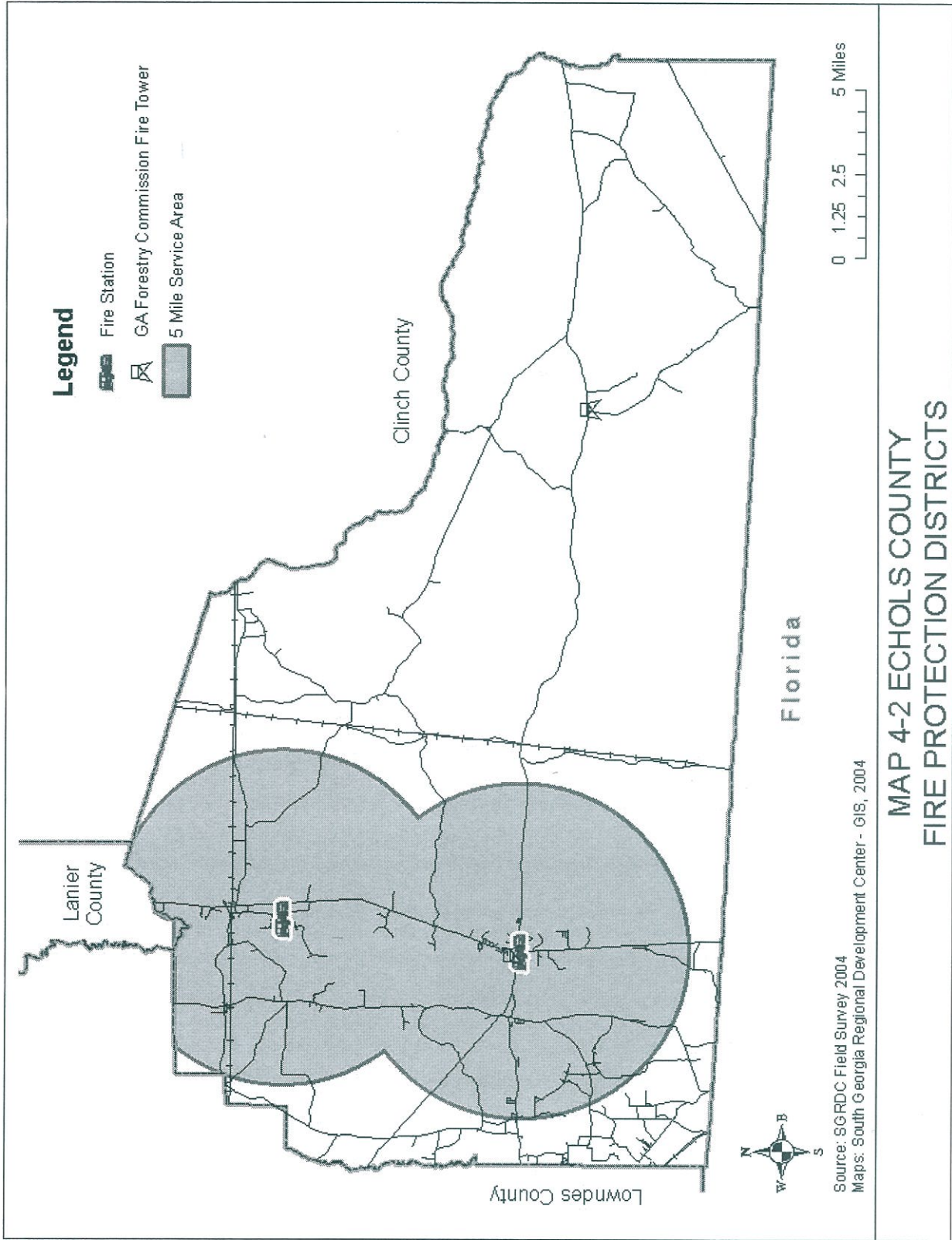
District	No. of Volunteers	Year	Model	Gallon Capacity	Ownership	ISO Rating	Type
Statenville FS # 1	5		Dodge	3,000	County	9	Tanker
		1984	Volvo	1,200	County		Fireknocker
		1981	Ford FMC	750	County		Pumper
		1990	Ford 350	200	County		Quick Response Truck
Coggins Farm & Produce FS #2	5	1985	Ford 600	1K/500gpm	County	9	Pumper
May Day Fielding Rd. FS # 3.	4		Chevrolet	950	County	9	Fireknocker
Tarver Will Rewis Rd. FS # 4	2	1969	IHC	900/500gpm	County	9	Pumper

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, Echols County Fire Coordinator/Fire Chief, 2005.

It is imperative that on an annual basis the County renews fire protection cooperating agreements with everyone that is willing to help out in an Echols County fire. Echols County maintains mutual aid agreements with Lowndes County Fire and Rescue and the Lake Park Fire Department.

The Echols County Commission has constructed 9 dry hydrants located throughout the county. These dry hydrants become invaluable when fighting a rural fire without a public water supply and the carrying capacity of the fire protection fleet is small. These dry hydrants became operational in 1995 and 1996. The Statenville water system has 19 fire hydrants served by a 75,000 gallon elevated water tank, and Coggins Farm and Produce has one 1,800gpm fire hydrant at the carrot packing plant located at 2686 J. Frank Culpepper Road.

The Statenville Volunteer Fire Department operates out of a new four-bay fire station located 229 State Route 94, east of the courthouse. Fire Station #1 is a new 4,500 square foot structure that includes a meeting room and storage for a tanker, fireknocker, pumper and quick response vehicle. The Statenville VFD serves as the weekly meeting, training and maintenance location. The Echols County Commission could request the Georgia Forestry Commission to prepare a fire protection plan. Most counties use their fire protection plans to stage the development of new fire stations, promotion of volunteer departments, coordination of communications, and provision of coverage throughout the county. The development of the plan is not a lengthy process, but all participants gain a complete



**MAP 4-2 ECHOLS COUNTY  
 FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS**

understanding of the pertinent information including costs and liabilities of providing rural fire protection. With normal maintenance and upgrades the Echols County Volunteer Fire Department will serve the county throughout the twenty-year planning period.

## **HEALTH CARE**

### **Echols County Health Department**

The Echols County Health Department was constructed in 1998, and is located south and across the street from the Courthouse in Statenville on State Route 94. This one-story brick structure has 5,668 square feet of floor area and has reception area, several offices and ample examination rooms. An average of 30 new clients and 300 re-visiting clients per month are served in basic public health programs consisting of Tuberculosis Control, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Immunizations, Stroke, Heart Attack Prevention Program, Health Check (care for well babies and children) and Family Planning. In addition, services are provided in perinatal case management, HIV testing, and counseling, Women, Infants, and Children's nutritional program, Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, and a full range of Environmental Services. The Health Department employs 2 full-time and has the services of 10 part-time personnel. This facility will adequately serve Echols County throughout the twenty-year planning period.

### **Echols County Department of Family and Children Services**

The Department of Family and Children Services is located on GA 94 east of the Courthouse and across the street from the Echols County High School. This one-story 2,000 square foot brick structure was constructed in 1992 and has 7 offices, a conference room and a visiting room. The building is in excellent condition and has 15 paved parking spaces. This social service agency has 6 full-time and seven "shared" employees. Their programs include the Food Stamp Program, the Peach Program Child and Adult Protective Services, Medicaid for individuals, Foster Care, Day Care Services and aid to families with dependent children. This building should adequately serve Echols County throughout the twenty-year planning period.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

There are no hospitals within Echols County, and the County Commission has relied upon a mutual aid agreement for emergency medical services from the South Georgia Medical Center. With headquarters in Valdosta, the South Georgia Medical Center provides emergency medical services to Echols and Lowndes Counties. This service answers an average of 12 to 15 calls per month and approximately 180 per year in Echols County. Echols County pays \$500 per month that amounts to \$6,000 per year, which primarily covers indigent costs.

The South Georgia Medical Center has five sites with ambulances and those that serve Echols County are located in Lake Park and on Griffin Street in Valdosta. The ambulances are equipped with EKG cardiac telemetry and the "Jaws of Life" hydraulic extracting devices. Staffing includes 42 full-time Certified Paramedics, 6 part-time paramedics, and 2 full-time and 12 part-time Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). The basic difference between a paramedic and an EMT is that a paramedic receives an additional 1,000 hours of advanced training.

According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the agency responsible for licensing and training emergency medical personnel, there is no minimum response time that ambulance services must meet. The average response time in rural Georgia is eleven minutes. For the western half of Echols County, the average response time ranges from 10 to 14 minutes. The present operation satisfactorily serves Echols County and could continue to serve them throughout the twenty-year planning period. There are grant funds available to purchase ambulances and equipment and pay for the training of volunteer or full-time paramedics. This funding would get the initial operation started, but thereafter the operational costs would be borne by Echols County. (Annual operational costs in Lowndes

County for a 24-hour 7-day manned facility amount to \$240,000 per year). This issue merges with the provision of Enhanced 911 system for dispatching and exact location of the user. Echols County utilizes the Lowndes County E-911 system for dispatching.

Feasibility studies are needed to address the need to amend the mutual aid agreement for emergency medical services from the South Georgia Medical Center for the provision of an EMS station in Echols County to reduce the response time and ultimately save lives. Such a facility study should include operating costs for less than 24-7 manned operations.

## **PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM**

The Statenville Water System, Inc., a private corporation, owns and operates the community water system. The distribution system is graphically depicted on Map 4-3: Statenville Water Distribution System. The present 3.2 mile distribution system uses two wells located north of the GA. 94/ U.S. 129 intersection adjacent to the 75,000 gallon elevated water storage tank. The second well was constructed in 1994 as a back up to Well No. 1, which is an 8 inch well with a design capacity of 240,000 gallons per day. The initial system was constructed in 1968 to serve 140 customers. The present system, with additional lines added to the north and east, has 375 customers. The Corporation constructed the \$132,900 initial system with a \$75,800 loan and a \$55,100 grant from Farmers Home Administration. This initial debt was paid in full in 2003. The Corporation intends to add lines when the density increases and has tentative plans to re-place some of the original lines during the next ten years. With normal maintenance the Statenville water distribution system should adequately serve the Statenville community throughout the twenty-year planning period.

## **SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM**

There are no public sanitary sewer systems in Echols County today, but the need exists especially in Statenville for the proposed new middle/high school and if Echols County wants to promote economic development.

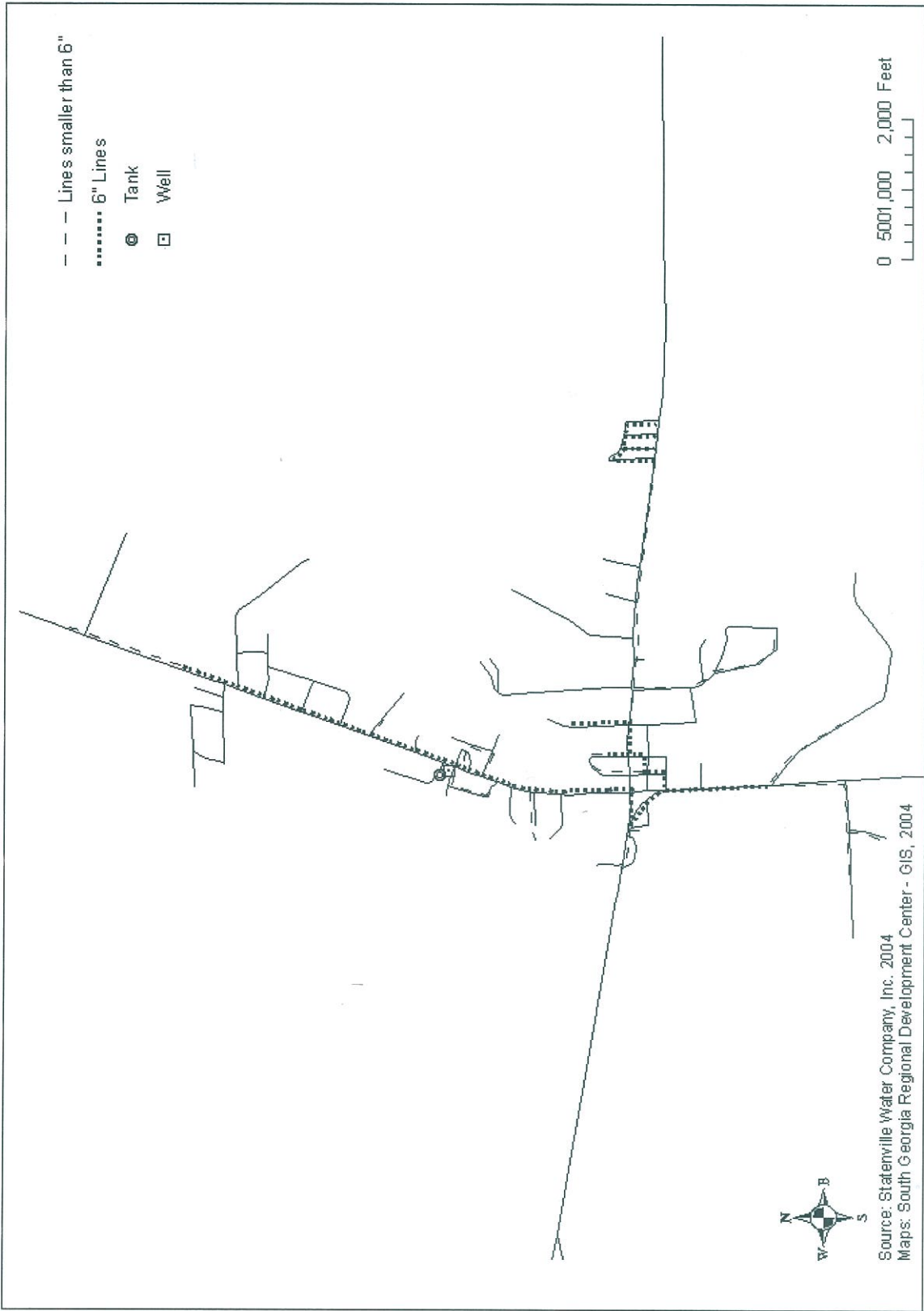
## **ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION SERVICE**

Slash Pine Electric Membership Corporation and Georgia Power Company service the electric consumer base in Echols County. Table 4-2 details the customer base of the two utility companies and Slash Pine has 62 percent of the customer base.

**TABLE 4-2  
1994 and 2004 ELECTRIC SUPPLY BY COMPANY AND CLASS**

	Georgia Power Company		Slash Pine Electric Membership Co.		TOTALS		
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	Change
Residential	442	540	787	1,080	1,229	1,620	391
Commercial	73	113	12	2	85	115	30
Industrial	4	1	0	0	4	1	-3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>418</b>

Source: Georgia Power Company and Slash Pine Electric Membership Corporation, 2005.



Source: Statenville Water Company, Inc. 2004  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004



**MAP 4-3 STATENVILLE  
 WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**

Both utility companies have reserve capacity in their local electrical distribution systems and can meet the power needs of all major new customers. With normal maintenance and upgrades the electrical power distribution systems will adequately serve Echols County during the twenty-year planning period.

## **SOLID WASTE**

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 required all local governments in Georgia to develop a ten-year solid waste management plan. Echols County, along with the following counties: Ben Hill, Brooks, Cook, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, and Tift have jointly prepared and gained Georgia Departments of Natural Resources and Community Affairs concurrence on the South Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Management Plan on September 18, 1992. Echols adopted their individual solid waste management plan in 1993, amended the five-year work programs in 1998 and 2003. New local comprehensive planning standards and procedures and solid waste management planning standards and procedures became effective in 2004. Echols County opted to prepare separate ten-year documents for the joint local comprehensive plan and the solid waste management plan.

Since 1993, all county solid waste is collected by a private contractor and disposed in a private Sub-Title D landfill in Lowndes County and there are assurances in writing that these solid wastes can be disposed for ten years. The proposed “2006-2015 Echols County Solid Waste Management Plan” includes programs and strategies to more effectively reduce the amount of solid waste and intensify recycling efforts. Echols County is now implementing their action programs.

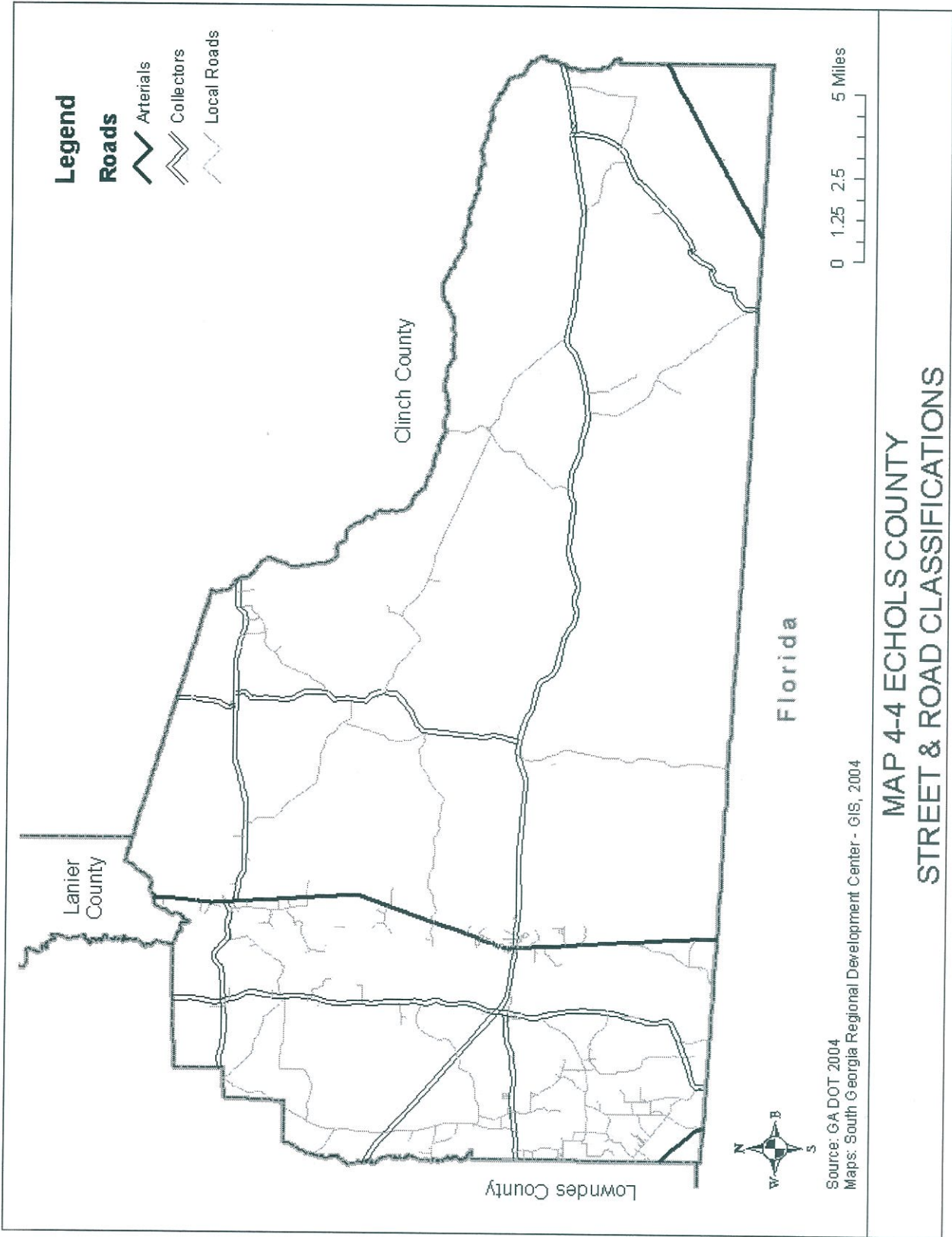
## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Streets and Roads**

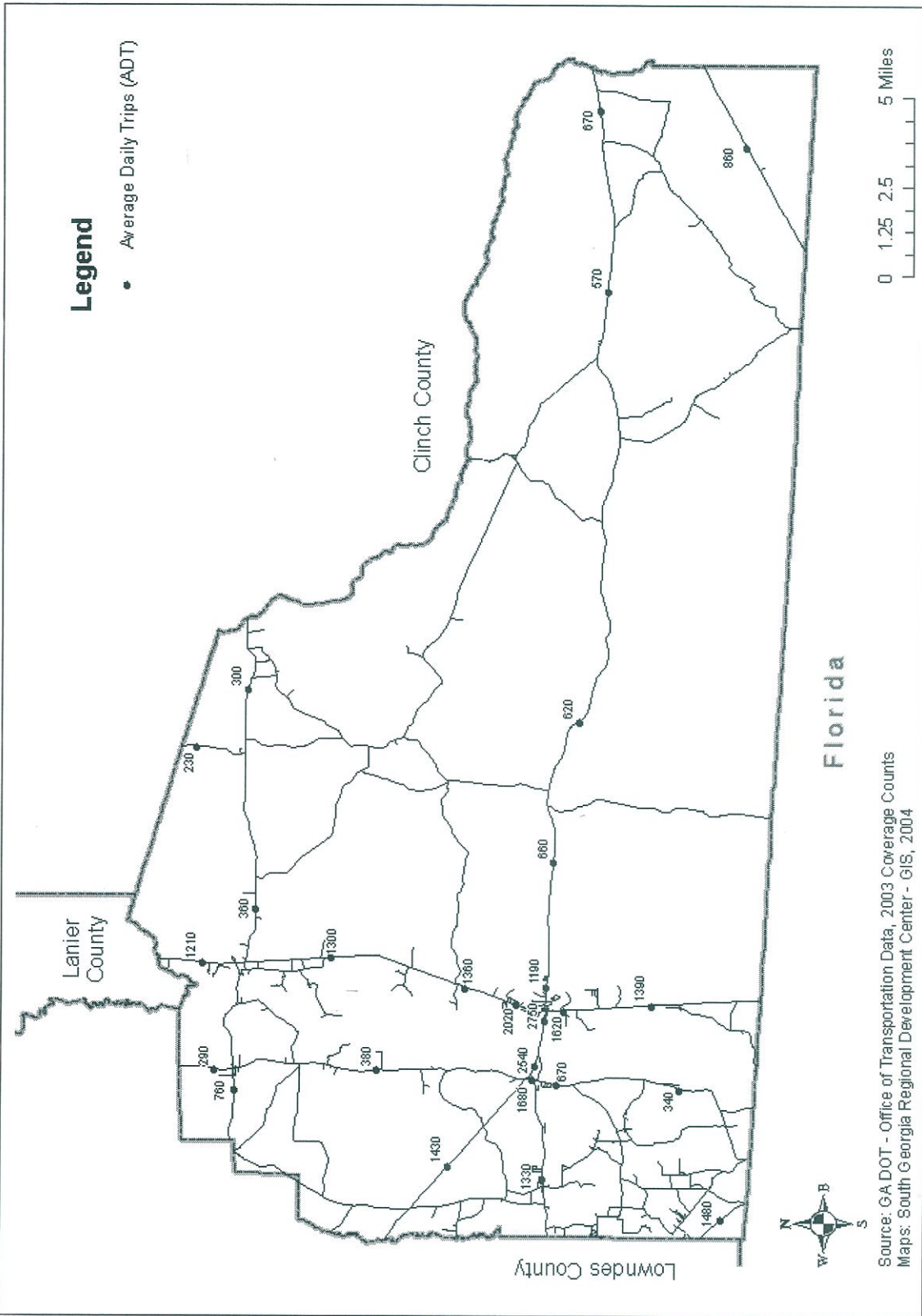
The Georgia Department of Transportation has prepared a functional classification system for all roadways in Echols County. This functional classification system provides a useful tool for public management because roads are classified according to the character of service they provide. Roads provide two basic functions: access to property and corridors for movement of people and goods. Map 4-4: Echols County Street and Road Classifications depicts the county street and road classifications. These functional road classifications are defined as follows:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <u>Arterial</u>  | These roadways are designed to carry relatively large traffic volumes throughout the city and county and to major trip generating destinations such as centers of employment and large shopping districts. In typically rural counties such as Lanier, these roadways are usually federally and state maintained highways which link to other communities in surrounding counties. |
| <u>Collector</u> | These roadways are designed to collect traffic from the local street system and carry it to arterial roadways. While experiencing greater volumes and speeds than the local road network, these roadways also provide direct access to adjacent properties.  |
| <u>Local</u>     | These roadways are intended to be relatively low-volume with a primary function of providing direct access to property.  |

There are two federal and four state highways that border or cross portions of Echols County. These roads provide linkages to other communities in surrounding counties such as Valdosta, Lake Park, Lakeland, Homerville, Waycross, Fargo, Jennings, Jasper, and Lake City. There are linkages to the Atlantic Ocean and to metropolitan centers to the west and north.







**MAP 4-5 ECHOLS COUNTY  
TRAFFIC VOLUMES**

Source: GA DOT - Office of Transportation Data, 2003 Coverage Counts  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004

Traffic volumes throughout Echols County are comparatively low and these volumes are depicted on Map 4-5: Echols County Traffic Volumes. The largest traffic volume is located on US 129 and Georgia 94 in the center of Statenville with 2,750 average vehicles per day. The second highest volume is located on the western edge of Echols County on Georgia 94 and GA. 135 intersection at 2,540 average vehicles per day. Georgia 94 in the eastern side of Echols County averages 670 vehicles per day and US 441 on the extreme southeastern corner average 860 vehicles per day.

The published Georgia Department of Transportation, Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs for FY '05 - FY '07 that show proposed construction projects for all counties identifies two projects in Echols County. The first project is the replacement of the Suwannee Creek Bridge on State Route 94 with an anticipated construction date in 2005. The second project is the replacement of the Little River bridge located on State Route 135 approximately five miles south of junction of State Route 376. Project construction is projected for FY 2005.

### **Railroad Service**

Rail freight service is non-existent in Echols County. The Seaboard Coast Line (CSX), which divided the county, has been removed, while the Georgia Southern Railroad running east to west along Georgia Highway 187, is no longer utilized.

### **Aviation**

General aviation services are not provided in Echols County. The closest major airport is located in Valdosta.

## **RECREATION**

The breakdown of existing public recreation facilities managed by the Echols County Recreation Board on 14.4 acres located at the school, Recreation Department site, and county boat ramp on the Alapaha River is summarized as follows: 2 baseball/softball fields (fenced and lighted), 1 tennis court, 1 basketball court, and two playgrounds (swings, slides, etc.). The County's Recreation Department is located in a 2,880 square foot block structure, also provides indoor recreation facilities for youngsters and is rented to various groups for community gatherings.

**TABLE 4-3  
ECHOLS COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND STANDARDS**

FACILITY	STANDARDS
Baseball/Softball Fields	1/3,000 population
Basketball Courts	1/5,000 population
Tennis Courts	1/2,000 population
Swimming Pool	1/10,000 population
Total Park/Land Acreage	10 Acres/1,000 population

Source: National Recreation & Parks Association, 1983, Modified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The standards found in Table 4-3 were applied to Echols County from a total parkland acreage basis using 2000 U. S. Bureau of Census figures, to arrive at the numbers of acre deficiencies shown in Table 4-4.

**TABLE 4-4  
ECHOLS COUNTY RECREATION ACREAGE DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>Compute</b>	<b>Minimum Acreage 1Ac/100</b>	<b>Existing Park Acres</b>	<b>Percent Standard Met</b>	<b>Acres Needed</b>
Echols Co.	3,754	3.754x10	37.54	14.4	38%	23.14

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Echols County meets and exceeds the "facility" standards for baseball/softball fields, and basketball courts; but needs another tennis court. However, in total acreage devoted to recreational use Echols County is 23.14 acres short today (2005) and will be another 8.3 acres deficient by 2025. The Echols County Commission and the Board of Education have coordinated their funds, programs, and lands to provide high quality recreation opportunities for everyone in Echols County. Major landowners have tacitly allowed citizens the opportunity to use their lands for recreational pursuits. Bearing these aforementioned facts Echols County officials believe recreation opportunities are being provided and they do not intend to purchase more parklands within the next five years. The County gained financial assistance with the Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Area and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division to rehabilitate/re-construct the county boat ramp on the Alapaha River in order to improve public access to a very treasured recreational resource. Fencing is being constructed to protect the Alapaha River in the Mayday area from vehicular use of the floodplain and riverbanks.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Hansford Allen Echols County Library**

The Hansford Allen Echols County Library is located south of the Sheriff's office. The Library is a member of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System and is operated under the direction of the Echols County Library Board. The library operates under the Georgia State Public Library Services Division of the Georgia Department of Education. Funding for the library is shared by the Echols County Commission, and the Echols County Board of Education.

The one-story brick structure containing 2,251 square feet was constructed in 1991 and dedicated July 19, 1992. The library contains approximately 3,000, with space for another 5,000 books and subscribes to 25 periodicals in addition to the Inter-Library and Intra-Library Loan System, which gives the library access to materials all over the southeast. The library is staffed by one full-time employee, one part-time employee and one volunteer. The library is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday, through Friday. The library is fully automated with six computers, the internet and links to access information requests from other libraries participating in the Coastal Plain Regional Library System. Each Wednesday afternoon the library conducts computer-training classes. With normal maintenance and upkeep the library will serve the needs of Echols County throughout the twenty-year planning period.

## **EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

### **Echols County Board of Education**

The Echols County Board of Education Boardroom and Superintendent office is located at 216 GA. 129 North. This structure was constructed in 1999 and has 1,997 square feet of floor space containing offices for four persons. Immediately behind this office is a 3,000 square foot school bus shop, which was constructed in 2000. These structures will adequately serve the Board of Education throughout the twenty-year planning period.

The one-story structure contains 15,000 square feet and was constructed in 1931 and renovated and added to in 1994. The Echols County Board of Education is planning to construct a new middle/high school, grades 6-12, by 2007.

The projected cost of this new school is approximately \$6,500,000. This new school structure meets the existing and future needs of the Board of Education and will serve Echols County throughout the twenty-year planning period.

A breakdown of grades, and teachers shows the Echols County Board of Education operating two schools with 46 teachers and 34 support and 4 part-time personnel.

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	TEACHERS	SUPPORT STAFF
Echols County School	Statenville	Pre-K-12	50	34

Total enrollment for 1994 through 2004 from the Georgia Department of Education and 2010 projection from Echols Co. B. O. E. is as follows:

<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2010</u>
660	659	655	676	679	680	686	701	716	731	737	796

Echols County School prides itself in an extremely low dropout rate in the 2.0% or lower each year and they have increased from 40% to 60% the number of graduating students attending post-secondary schools. The most frequently attended post-secondary schools are Valdosta Technical Institute, South Georgia College in Douglas (a two year program) and Valdosta State University. There is no Head Start program in Echols County, so the school system offers a pre-kindergarten program for four year olds. The school system also manages an adult literacy program.

## COUNTY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

### GOAL

**Increase an intensive mixture of employment, goods, services, and residential use in Activity Centers; link high intensity Activity Centers; provide a wide variety of residential and employment alternatives both inside and outside Activity Centers; and achieve the highest standards of quality in the urban environment.**

### POLICY

- Local services, such as schools, public safety and fire protection, public roads and streets, water, sanitary sewer and drainage facilities, and parks should be planned to be adequate for the population and employment densities anticipated. Areas of the community where local services are available should be developed first. New land should be opened for urbanization in a staged contiguous manner through a coordinated program of public service extensions. Cooperative arrangements between service providers are paramount. Where practical, investment in all services, including schools, shall be consistent with the county future land use plan.

### POLICY

- Create a sanitary sewer district within the Statenville area for the provision of a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system.

## CHAPTER FIVE: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

It is important to take a close look at the existing housing supply in Echols County to determine the number and types of housing needed in the next 25 years. A tabular summary of state and county housing data is presented to familiarize the reader with comparable and contrasting housing data and trends.

**TABLE 5-1  
1980-2000 STATE OF GEORGIA HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

Category	1980	1990	2000		# Change 1980 - 2000	% Change
Total Units	2,012,640	2,638,418	3,281,737		1,269,097	63.1
Single Family	1,525,070	1,801,627	2,291,837	69.8	766,767	50.3
Multi-Family	334,622	508,903	681,019	20.8	346,397	103.5
Manufactured Homes	152,948	305,055	394,938	12.0	241,990	158.2
Owner Occupied Units	1,216,459	1,536,759	2,029,293	61.8	812,834	66.8
Renter Occupied Units	655,913	829,856	977,076	29.8	321,163	49.0
Vacant Units	140,988	271,803	275,378	8.4	134,380	95.3
Owner to Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	0.32	0.51			-
Owner Vac. Rate	NA	2.36	2.24			-
Renter Vac. Rate	NA	12.36	8.46			-
Built before 1939	296,662	212,294	192,972	5.9	-103,690	-35.0
Lacking complete plumbing	35,769	28,462	29,540	0.9	-6,229	-17.4
Median Value Owner Occupied	\$23,100	\$71,278	\$111,200	-	\$88,100	381.4
Lower Quartile		\$47,300	\$77,000			
Upper Quartile	-	\$102,100	\$167,000			
Median Rent	\$153	\$365	\$505	-	\$352	230.0
Lower Quartile		\$202	\$320			
Upper Quartile		\$466	\$692			
All other Units	4,289	22,833	4,313	0.1	24	0.6

Source: US Bureau of Census 1980, 1990, and 2000. NA = Not Available NR = Not Reported

**TABLE 5-2  
ECHOLS COUNTY HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 1980 - 2000**

	Year-Round				All		1980 2000 Change	
	1980 number	%	1990 number	%	2000 number	%	number	%
Total Units	808		942		1,482		674	83.4
Single Family	588	72.8	538	57.1	632	42.6	44	7.5
Multi-Family	26	3.2	0	-	5	0.3	-21	-80.7
Manufactured Homes	194	24.0	404	42.8	840	56.7	646	330.0
Vacant Units	73	9.0	126	13.4	218	14.7	145	198.6
Owner Occupied Units	582	79.2	664	81.4	957	64.6	375	64.4
Owner Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	--	1.0	57	5.6	--	--
Renter Occupied Units	153	20.8	152	18.6	307	20.7	154	100.7
Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	--	8.4	61	16.6	--	--
Built before 1939	174	21.5	95	10.1	69	4.7	- 105	- 60.3
Lacking Complete Plumbing	95	11.8	46	4.9	23	1.6	- 72	- 75.8
Owner Median Value	\$ 22,828	--	\$ 46,088	--	\$76,000		\$ 53,172	232.9
25th Percentile Value		NR	\$ 28,805	--	\$37,300		\$8,495	37.3
75th Percentile Value		NR	\$ 69,593	--	\$101,100		\$31,507	45.3
Renter Median Rent	\$ 60	--	\$ 178	--	\$390		\$ 330	550
25th Percentile Rent		NR	\$ 114	--	\$203		\$89	78.1
75th Percentile Rent		NR	\$ 240	--	\$416		\$176	73.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000. NR = Not Reported NA = Not Available

**TABLE 5-3  
1980 - 2025 PERSONS PER HOUSING UNIT IN ECHOLS COUNTY**

Unit	1980	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Echols County	3.10	2.83	2.97	2.97	2.96	2.97	2.96	2.92	2.89	2.88	2.89	2.92
RDC	3.00	2.78	2.76	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.73	2.72	2.73	2.75	2.81
State	2.80	2.74	2.71	2.64	2.63	2.63	2.62	2.69	2.67	2.67	2.69	2.72

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004.

**TABLE 5-4  
1980 - 2025 ECHOLS COUNTY NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS**

Unit	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Echols County	741	821	1,275	1,344	1,409	1,471	1,523	1,570
South Ga. RDC	61,783	66,061	76,532	81,006	85,293	89,213	92,652	95,305
State	1,886,550	2,380,830	3,022,410	3,265,030	3,501,680	3,727,580	3,929,140	4,108,410

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002 and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004.

**Numerical and Percentage Change**

Unit	1980 - 1990		1990 - 2000		2000 - 2010		2010 - 2020		2000 - 2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Echols County	80	10.8	454	55.3	134	10.5	114	8.1	295	23.1
South Ga. RDC	4,278	6.9	10,471	15.9	8,761	11.4	10,359	12.1	18,773	24.5
State	501,253	26.6	641,580	26.9	479,270	15.9	427,460	12.2	1,086,000	35.9

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002 and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004.

**Table 5-5: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 1980**

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	477	1,167	40.80%	435	1,562	27.80%	2,729	912	33.40%	11.90%
Brooks	432	935	46.20%	419	1,815	23.10%	2,750	851	30.90%	14.00%
Cook	325	836	38.90%	536	2,133	25.10%	2,969	861	29.00%	12.10%
Echols	20	67	29.90%	25	259	9.70%	326	45	13.80%	24.00%
Irwin	209	530	39.40%	242	1,127	21.50%	1,657	451	27.20%	10.60%
Lanier	118	368	32.10%	137	676	20.30%	1,044	255	24.40%	18.20%
Lowndes	3,026	7,711	39.20%	2,004	10,182	19.70%	17,893	5,030	28.10%	10.20%
Tift	1,171	2,948	39.70%	916	4,713	19.40%	7,661	2,087	27.20%	14.80%
Turner	328	721	45.50%	307	1,179	26.00%	1,900	635	33.40%	10.40%
Region	6,106	15,283	40.00%	5,021	23,646	21.20%	38,929	11,127	28.60%	12.70%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 2000. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

**Table 5-6: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 1990**

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	771	1,749	44.10%	513	2,704	19.00%	4,453	1,284	28.80%	20.70%
Brooks	453	1,074	42.20%	543	1,982	27.40%	3,056	996	32.60%	36.80%
Cook	348	977	35.60%	331	2,136	15.50%	3,113	679	21.80%	27.10%
Echols	36	95	37.90%	43	252	17.10%	347	79	22.80%	42.90%
Irwin	254	574	44.30%	230	1,120	20.50%	1,694	484	28.60%	23.40%
Lanier	126	428	29.40%	104	664	15.70%	1,092	230	21.10%	34.20%
Lowndes	3,706	9,691	38.20%	2,173	11,390	19.10%	21,081	5,879	27.90%	15.50%
Tift	1,425	3,588	39.70%	886	5,117	17.30%	8,705	2,311	26.50%	23.70%
Turner	370	839	44.10%	268	1,140	23.50%	1,979	638	32.20%	20.10%
Region	7,489	19,015	39.40%	5,091	26,505	19.20%	45,520	12,580	27.60%	21.70%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 1990. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 1996, 2003.

**Table 5-7: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 2000**

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	779	2,185	35.70%	635	3,022	21.00%	5,207	1,414	27.20%	25.20%
Brooks	418	1,346	31.10%	604	2,350	25.70%	3,696	1,022	27.70%	32.40%
Cook	471	1,417	33.20%	614	2,433	25.20%	3,850	1,085	28.20%	35.20%
Echols	74	272	27.20%	64	321	19.90%	593	138	23.30%	54.00%
Irwin	222	780	28.50%	284	1,372	20.70%	2,152	506	23.50%	32.10%
Lanier	188	578	32.50%	263	964	27.30%	1,542	451	29.20%	40.50%
Lowndes	4,791	12,672	37.80%	3,180	15,043	21.10%	27,715	7,971	28.80%	14.90%
Tift	1,462	4,530	32.30%	911	5,809	15.70%	10,339	2,373	23.00%	27.50%
Turner	319	948	33.60%	275	1,217	22.60%	2,165	594	27.40%	30.40%
Region	8,724	24,728	35.30%	6,830	32,531	21.00%	57,259	15,554	27.20%	24.20%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 2000. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.



## **Types of Housing in Georgia**

Interpreting housing statistics from the Census Bureau is complicated by changes in definitions and reporting standards. In 1980, housing characteristics were presented only for year-round housing units. In 1990 and 2000 housing characteristics are shown for all housing units, which includes year-round units plus seasonal, migratory and recreational units. Care should be utilized in interpreting these statistics.

## **Condition of Housing in Georgia**

Table 5-1 reviews two traditional indicators of housing quality. The "Built before 1939" statistic summarizes the inventory of older houses. Obviously, this is an incomplete indicator since some older houses may have been restored and/or remodeled. The "Lacking Complete Plumbing" value is probably more indicative of substandard housing.

## **Housing Costs in Georgia**

Table 5-1 provides insights into the cost of owning and renting housing in Georgia. Median values for owner-occupied housing and median rent for rented units reported in the 1980, 1990 and 2000 Censuses are listed. Note that these figures are estimates provided by owners and renters filling out census questionnaires.

In addition, lower quartile and upper quartile values as reported in the 2000 Census are provided. Combined with the median (e.g. the "middle" value), useful insights into the cost of housing can be obtained. Note that these dollar values are in the "actual dollars" of the year reported, not in "constant dollars" that removes the effects of inflation.

## **Types of Housing in Echols County**

The 1980 to 2000 increase in housing units was 669 units for Echols County, which averages out to nearly 33 per year. Of this total increase 96.7 percent (646) were manufactured homes. During this same twenty-year period 44 single family homes were added to the housing stock and 21 multi-family units were removed from the Echols County housing supply. Manufactured homes constituted 10.7% of the housing supply in 1970 and by 2000 represented 56.7 percent of all housing units.

Single-family housing (stick-built) units have dropped from 87.4 percent of the total housing units in 1970 to 42.6 percent in 2000. Echols County added two single-family houses per year and averaged 32 manufactured homes per year since 1980. Manufactured homes have increased 646 units, an increase of 330 percent from 1980 to 2000. Statewide, the number of manufactured homes has increased 158.2 percent in the same twenty-year period. In Echols County, multi-family units increased from 11 in 1970, to 26 in 1980, and then disappeared by the 1990, and 5 were in the 2000 census.

Owner occupied units have decreased by 14.6 percent from 79.2 percent to 64.6 percent between 1980 and 2000. This is opposite of the State of Georgia who had 60.4 percent owner occupancy in 1980, and increased 1.4 percent to 61.8 percent by 2000. Common to most of

rural Georgia is the placement of a manufactured home as a permanent residence. Echols County is no exception. The level of personal income allows the residents to purchase an affordable manufactured home, coupled with demise of multi-family units has triggered the rise of owner occupancy in Echols County.

In Echols County (Table 5-2), rental occupancy has risen by 0.1 percent between 1980 and 2000. There have been several shifts in population and the number of renter occupied has doubled. Overall the number of renter occupied units increased from 153 to 307. There are no public housing units for elderly, low/moderate income or handicapped persons in Echols County. Without the provision of public water and sewer services, it is highly unlikely any public housing will be constructed in Echols County.

### **Housing Value and Condition**

The cost of housing is reflected in the median value of owner occupied units and the median rents paid by renters. Echols County median housing unit values rose between 1980 and 2000 at a percentage rate far less than the state of Georgia. However, comparisons with Georgia numerical dollar values for housing units and median rents is not quite possible due to metropolitan influences of extremely high land values, higher wage and personal incomes and more persons able to mortgage long-term costly housing. The 1980 owner median value for Echols County- \$22,828 rose to \$76,000 by 2000. During the same twenty-year period renter median rent rose from \$60 to \$390. The median rent throughout Georgia rose by 230 percent from \$153 in 1980 to \$505 in 2000. Echols County exhibited a 550 percent increase in median rent from 1980 to 2000.

The housing tables show Echols County to have a higher percentage of housing "built before 1939" than the whole state of Georgia in 1980 and 1990, but slightly less in 2000. Comparing the housing category "lacking complete plumbing" the percentage descent in the county mirrors the trend of the whole State. However, there are 23 units (1.6 percent of all housing units), which still lack complete plumbing. Local surveys of the housing conditions show out-dated electrical and heating systems combined with deterioration promote the necessity to seek rehabilitation program funds. Some of the worst housing conditions are found in clusters of manufactured homes with 20 of the 34 manufactured homes vacant or abandoned.

### **Housing Vacancy**

In Table 5-1 for the State between 1980 and 2000 the number of statewide vacant housing units rose from 140,988 to 275,378, a 95.3 percent increase. Data does not exist for the 1980 percent vacancy rates for the homeowner and renter occupied units. In 2000, Georgia had a homeowner vacancy rate of 2.2 percent and a renter vacancy rate of 8.5 percent. Echols County had a homeowner vacancy rate of 5.6 percent and a renter vacancy rate of 16.6 percent in 2000. The low rate of owner occupancy/renter vacancy has stabilized the housing market in Echols County. Without the 1980 numerical trend data it is difficult to draw any conclusions.

## **Renter/Owner Cost Burden**

Tables 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7 show the nine county region comparisons of the 1980-2000 renters and owner housing cost as a percentage of household income. The number and percentages are shown for all renters and owners that exceeded thirty percent of household income for rents and mortgage payments. Echols County renters that exceed thirty percent of their household income were 29.9 percent in 1980; 37.9 percent in 1990 and 27.2 percent by 2000. Homeowners that exceeded thirty percent of their household income were 9.7 percent in 1980; 17.1 percent in 1990 and 19.9 by 2000. Total households (renters and owners) that exceeded greater than thirty percent of household income for housing ranged from 45 (13.8 percent) to 138 (23.3 percent) from 1980 to 2000.

## **HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES**

### **GOAL**

**Ensure that all people within Echols County have access to adequate and affordable housing.**

### **POLICY**

- Housing development agenda in Echols County should address needs of the elderly, low and moderate-income persons and families, handicapped and developmentally disabled persons.

### **GOAL**

**Ensure in an equitable manner that existing residential structures and neighborhoods are preserved, improved and maintained.**

### **POLICIES**

- Housing development agenda should give priority to projects involved in preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure: streets, walks, curbs, water and drainage systems, lighting and bridges.
- Neighborhood redevelopment projects should seek to conserve, rehabilitate, or relocate existing housing structures, in lieu of demolition, whenever feasible.
- The county is encouraged to adopt, enforce, revise and update building codes where applicable as to permit new concepts in building technology.
- Low interest loans and tax reduction activities or other alternatives should be developed to promote rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Encourage the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas.

- Protect viable and stable neighborhoods from uses not in keeping with their established character and use.
- The county is encouraged to adopt and enforce a land subdivision ordinance for the orderly layout of lots prior to development.

## CHAPTER SIX: EXISTING LAND USE

Consideration of existing land use is very important to planning future growth patterns for any community. For Echols County, existing land use patterns and densities have been inventoried and this data will provide community leaders with the information needed to develop goals and strategies for future growth patterns, as well as protect/preserve vulnerable natural and historic resources while respecting individual property rights. Existing land use patterns have a direct impact on a county's future growth, and the preparation and analysis of existing land use maps and data are integral to understanding land use relationships within Echols County.

### METHODOLOGY

Based on existing land use inventories conducted and digitized in previous years, rezonings, and field surveys, the land use database was updated for Echols County. Since a comprehensive land use survey existed, the update of this data required minimal work. For the past several years, any land use changes in Echols County have been updated in databases maintained by the South Georgia Regional Development Center. Since development in Echols County is so minimal, the South Georgia RDC has done this as changes occur. This is now the official database for Echols County.

Additionally, with upgrades in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) of the South Georgia Regional Development Center, accurate acreage for land uses were calculated. In some cases, there were major differences from the existing data in the comprehensive plan compared to what was calculated. In these instances, it was determined the new data would be used and considered accurate.

For purposes of analysis, land use inventory data was classified into nine (9) major categories which are based on standards currently established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs ("Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning", as amended January 2004). The major land use categories are defined as follows:

**RESIDENTIAL:** Land primarily used for single-family and/or multi-family dwelling units.

**COMMERCIAL:** Land primarily used for non-industrial business uses; including retail sales, offices, service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

**INDUSTRIAL:** Land primarily used for manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction, landfills, or other similar uses.

**PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL:** Land which primarily includes certain institutional uses, or federal, state, or local government uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc.. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.. Facilities which are publicly owned, but would be more accurately classified in another land use category are not included in this category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are placed in the PARK/RECREATION/CONSERVATION category, public landfills are placed in the INDUSTRIAL category, and office buildings containing government offices are placed in the COMMERCIAL category.

**TRANSPORTATION / COMMUNICATION / UTILITIES:** Land primarily used for street rights-of-way, railroads, public/private utilities, transmission towers, airports, or other similar uses.

**PARK / RECREATION / CONSERVATION:** Land primarily used for active or passive recreational uses. These may be either publicly or privately owned, and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national or state forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or other similar uses.

**AGRICULTURE:** Land primarily used for farming purposes, including fields, lots, pastures, croplands, specialty farms, livestock production, and aquaculture.

**FORESTRY:** Land primarily used for natural tree stands, commercial timber or pulpwood production.

**UNDEVELOPED / UNUSED:** Land that is cleared but not developed for a specific use, or land that was developed for a particular use but which has been abandoned for that use. This includes undeveloped portions of platted subdivisions and industrial parks, and parcels containing structures that have been vacant for some time and allowed to become deteriorated or dilapidated.

## **ECHOLS COUNTY**

Echols County is a primarily rural county located on the Georgia-Florida boundary and is bordered by Lowndes County on the west, Lanier County on the north, Clinch County on the northeast, and Hamilton and Columbia (both Florida counties) on the south. Although there are presently no incorporated cities in Echols County, the community of Statenville functions as the county's predominant rural service center. Secondary communities include Howell, Mayday, and Haylow. In addition, there are a number of residential subdivisions located within a six-mile arc along the western Echols/Lowndes boundary. Major highways servicing Echols County include U.S. 129 and State Highways 94, 135, 441, and 187.

Echols County was created by Legislative Act on December 13, 1858. Formed from sections of Lowndes and Clinch counties, Echols was 130th in order of counties organized in Georgia. The county was named in honor of General Robert M. Echols, long time member of the Georgia Legislature and veteran of the Mexican war. Historically, Echols has relied upon its production of turpentine and its modest agricultural yields as the predominant means of income for the county. The Georgia Southern and Seaboard Coast railroads fostered the settlement and growth of communities such as Howell, Mayday, Haylow, and Tarver. Today these communities are mere remnants of their past, and only Statenville remains as the most significant concentration of goods and services for the county.

Table 6-1 is a tabulation of land use acreage for the entire county. Echols County contains almost 5,000 acres of developed non-agricultural land, which includes almost 900 acres of street right-of-way, communication, and utilities. This accounts for less than 1.7% of the county's total land area (271,760 acres), but only 1.4 % when excluding street right-of-way, communication and utilities. Most of the urban development in Echols is spread throughout a six-mile arc along the western boundary of the county, with the largest single concentration located in Statenville. Secondary concentrations of urban development include Howell and Mayday, and along State Highway 135 and U.S. Highway 129. The extremely low percentage of urban development, coupled with its sporadic placement across the county, is indicative of the county's primarily rural character.

**TABLE 6-1  
ECHOLS COUNTY EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b># Acres</b>	<b>% Developed, Non-Ag./Forest Land</b>	<b>% Total Land</b>
Residential	2,221.8	44.9	.82
Commercial	24.1	0.5	.01
Industrial	114.9	2.3	.04
Public / Institutional	94.0	1.9	.03
Parks / Recreation / Conservation	1,605.8	32.4	.59
Transportation / Communication / Utilities	888.2	17.9	.33
<b>Total Developed, Non-Ag./Forest Land</b>	<b>4,948.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.82</b>
Agriculture (cropland, orchard, pasture)	16,614.5		6.11
Forest (commercial, natural)	250,003.0		92.00
Undeveloped / Unused	193.7		.07
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>271,760.0</b>		<b>100.00</b>

Source: 2005 South Georgia RDC Land Use database for Echols County

The Echols County Existing Land Use Map 6-1 graphically depicts the existing land use patterns exhibited in Echols County.

As can be seen by Map 6-1, there are vast amounts of forested and agricultural lands spread throughout the entire county. Forest cover by far accounts for the majority of the total land use (92.0%). There are also many small clusters of urban development as well as a scattering of individual urban uses throughout the western portion of the county. These clusters and individual uses may range from less than one acre to nearly 300 acres in size. Echols County consists of approximately 271,760 acres. An estimated 266,618 acres (98.1%) are devoted to agriculture or forestry uses. Transportation, Communication and Utilities account for 17.9% of developed lands, while the other five developed land use categories amount to 82.1% of developed lands. This percentage split is similar to most South Georgia counties.

Of the developed land in Echols County, residential uses comprise 2,221.8 acres (44.9%). Residential uses are exclusively in the form of single-family and manufactured home units. Although Echols has existing as well as newly developing manufactured home parks, there are no longer any multi-family dwellings located in the county. Conventional farmhouses and single manufactured homes located on individual parcels of farmland were inventoried as agricultural land use since the primary use of the land is considered to be agricultural, not residential. Most residential land uses are clustered in the old rural communities or in several newly developing residential subdivisions. The older communities, which will be discussed individually in the succeeding pages, include Statenville, Howell, Mayday, Haylow, and Tarver, with the largest residential concentration residing in Statenville. The remaining residential areas are located within a six-mile arc along the Lowndes/Echols County border and off of the main roads which bisect the county. Echols County has two newly developing manufactured home parks. The

first is located at the intersection of State Highway 376 and County Service Road 86, and is equipped to accommodate 24 homes. The second is located at the corner of State Highways 376 and 135 and is approximately 99% undeveloped. In addition, several newer and partially developed manufactured home parks can be found on State Highway 376 and on State Highway 94 outside of Statenville. These areas range from approximately 50 to 90% built-out. The Statenville community exhibits some mixed uses which serves to not only devalue existing and forthcoming property, but sets a precedent for future repetition and mixed growth patterns. The development includes both manufactured and single family residences as well as an industrial establishment (Custom Fiberglass). Echols County also suffers from several blighted residential areas which include both dilapidated and abandoned residential structures. The more notable locations include: the manufactured home park south of Howell on State Highway 135, which consists of 20 abandoned manufactured homes of a total of 34; and the Needmore community off of State Highway 94, which reveals several mobile homes in a state of disrepair.

Commercial land uses in Echols County total 24.1 acres, which is only 0.5% of the developed non-ag/forest land. Although only 13% (3.6 acres) of the commercial category is located in Statenville, it accounts for the most numerous commercial establishments in the county. The remaining acreage is dispersed throughout the county and includes uses such as Coggin's Supply, equipment rental, attorney's office, nurseries, Prime Time Outfitters, and convenience stores.

Industrial uses in Echols total 114.9 acres, or 2.3% of the developed non-agricultural land. The largest single industrial use is the Sand Mine (72 acres) located off of Howell Road west of Mayday. The county's remaining major industrial uses include: the inert landfill (State Highway 94 in Statenville), the Coggin vegetable packaging plant (Route 96), Custom Fiberglass (State Highway 94), and Echols Mill Work Shop (U.S. Highway 129).

Public/Institutional uses total 94.0 acres which accounts for 1.9% of the developed non-agricultural land. Of this total approximately 25 acres is located in Statenville and includes uses such as the County Courthouse, Fire Stations, Post Office, Echols County School, County Library, Department of Family and Children Services, Forestry Commission, State Highway Maintenance Shop, Health Clinic, Sheriff's Office, churches, and cemetery. The remaining 51 acres consists of churches, cemeteries, and fire watchtowers dispersed throughout rural parts of the county. Many of the churches are exceptionally old such as the Wayfare Primitive Baptist Church, Bethel Primitive Baptist, and Macedonia Baptist, and have long been a focal point for activities in the rural area.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC) uses total 1,605.8 acres and 32.4% of the developed non-ag/forest land. .01% of the PRC category (11.23 acres) is represented by the Echols County Recreation Center located in Statenville. .01% (2.2 acres) is a county boat ramp located on State Highway 94 at the Alapaha River on the western edge of Statenville. The remaining acre is the Roadside Park north of Statenville on U.S. Highway 129 and river corridors along the Alapaha and Suwannee rivers .

The second largest developed land use category in Echols County is Transportation, Communications, and Utilities, which encompasses 888.2 acres and represents 17.9% of the developed non-agricultural lands. Railroad and street right-of-way make up the vast majority of this land with approximately 11 acres devoted to communication and utility uses such as water tanks, electrical substations, and radio transmission towers.

The Undeveloped/Unused category totals 193.7 acres representing 0.07% of the total land area of Echols County. Most of this acreage (91.3%) consists of vacant residential lots located in the newly developing subdivisions and within the larger rural community of Statenville. Abandoned uses total 65 acres which is 2.9% of the land use category. Over 55% of this acreage is in the form of abandoned single-family and manufactured home units predominantly located in Haylow and the manufactured home park off of State Highway 135. The abandoned school and apparel industry in Statenville account for 26.25 acres or 7.3% of the abandoned acreage in Echols County.

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of land use development patterns in the established communities of Statenville, Mayday, Howell, Haylow, and Tarver. For comparison purposes to previous land use studies, a half-



mile radius from the center of the community was utilized. In Mayday and Howell, there are more structures outside this half-mile radius.

### **Statenville**

Statenville is Echols County's largest residential community and serves as the county's rural service center. Statenville consists of approximately 150 single-family homes and 203 manufactured homes. Statenville maintains the largest concentration of commercial and public institutional land uses within the county. There are approximately 8 commercial establishments encompassing 3.62 acres and 19 public institutional facilities comprising 25.85 acres. In addition, both the county's inert landfill and recreation center are located in Statenville.

### **Mayday**

In the past Mayday was home to a successful turpentine operation. Today, Mayday's foremost commercial operation is the Cherokee Rose Nursery. The 1966 Coastal Plain Area Planning & Development Commission's Existing Land Use Study reported that Mayday consisted of 2 manufactured homes, 36 dwellings, two retail stores and four churches. Today, Mayday maintains 31 single-family homes and 15 manufactured homes. Residential land use in Mayday totals 58.3 acres, while vacant and abandoned land totals 20.3 acres. One of the county's oldest structures, the Macedonia Baptist Church (1848), is located in Mayday. There are another 30 dwellings located north and near the Alapaha River, but these are outside the half-mile radius.

### **Howell**

The Howell community is located at the intersection of State Highway 187 and State Highway 135. According to the 1966 land use survey, Howell contained 32 dwellings, one church, and one retail store. Presently, Howell consists of 22 single-family homes, 14 manufactured homes, a church and a Masonic lodge. Residential land uses constitute 28.4 acres, while vacant/abandoned land totals 17.3 acres.

### **Haylow**

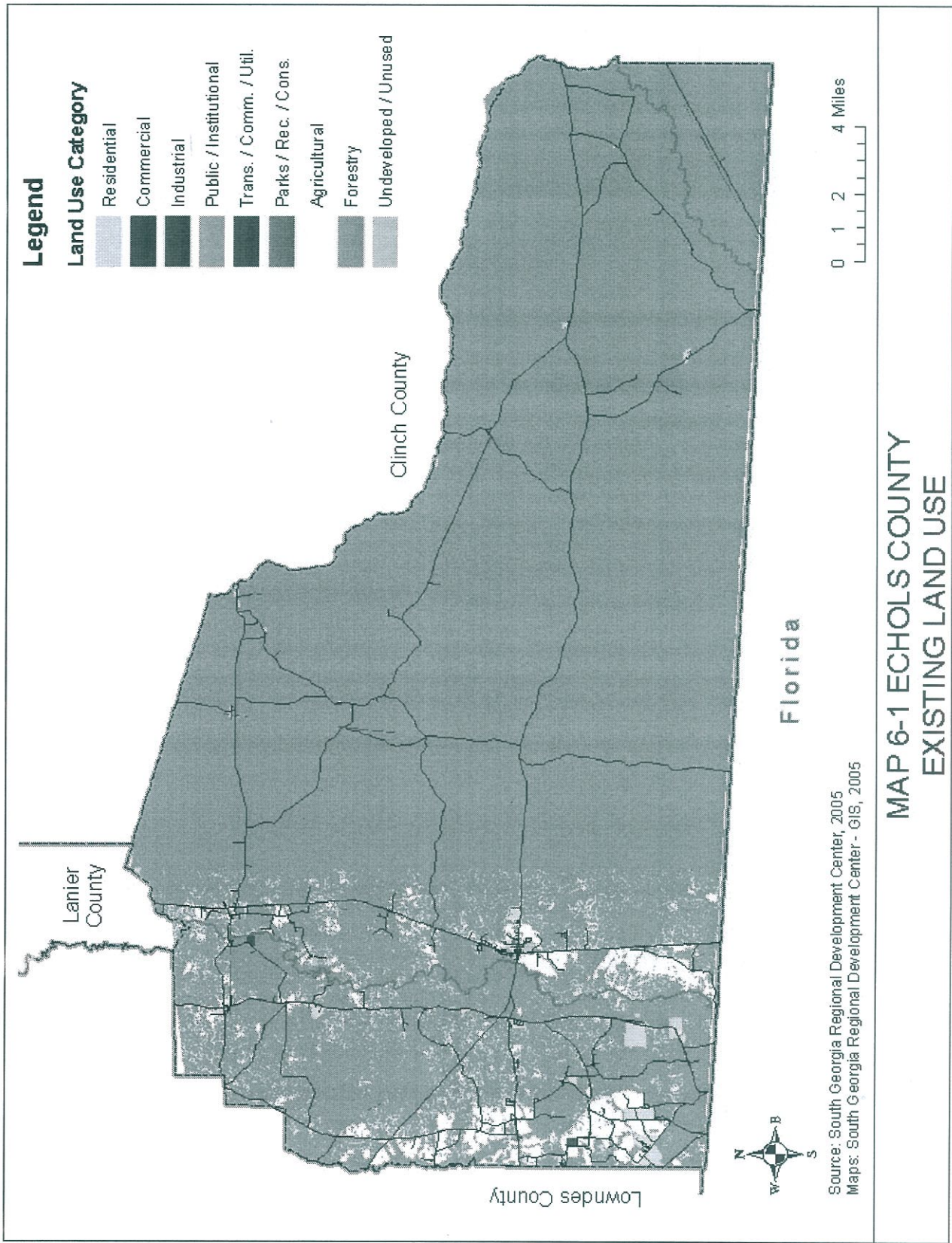
Haylow encompasses 8.6 acres of residential land use. Since 1966, Haylow has grown from two dwellings, 1 storage building and a church to 4 single-family homes and 1 manufactured home. The church and storage building are now abandoned structures. The total vacant/abandoned land in Haylow is approximately 22 acres. In addition, approximately 1 acre in Haylow is devoted to a radio tower.

### **Tarver**

In 1966 Tarver consisted of 7 dwellings and a church. Today, Tarver has two manufactured homes totaling approximately 3.5 acres, a fire watchtower, and an electrical substation.

## **DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Echols County has a planning advisory commission and the county now enforces eight mandatory State Construction Codes, and the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria concerning wetlands and groundwater recharge area protection, as well as protected river corridor ordinances for the Alapaha and Suwannee river corridors. The Echols County Planning Advisory Commission will build on these development controls by adding a land subdivision ordinance to guide the implementation of the future land use plan within the county.



## **CHAPTER 7 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

As detailed in the previous six chapters, the number of function activities, issues and services that must be addressed by local government in order to effectively plan for its future is immense. Adding complexity to this situation is the fact that the actions of other local governments, other governmental entities and even local authorities can have profound impacts on the implementation of local governments' comprehensive plans. The purpose of this plan section is to inventory and address the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms and policies to serve the current and future needs of Echols County as it seeks to implement goals and objectives that in some cases involve multiple governmental entities.

### **REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

Echols County is a member government served by the South Georgia Regional Development Center. One method of coordination of all state, federal and local governmental actions is the Georgia State Clearinghouse Intergovernmental Review Process that involves potentially affected governments/parties subject to the nature of the activity being undertaken. This review coordinating mechanism covers a large array of local, state and federal development projects and affected local jurisdictions are afforded the opportunity to comment on proposals in the planning stage.

A second strength for fostering local intergovernmental coordination is the design of the local planning function. By choice, Echols County formed a countywide planning advisory commission in 2004-05. This local planning process was not "seamless" since the creation of the County's Growth Strategies Advisory Committee in 1993 that produced the 2015 Echols County Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 1995.

### **COORDINATION MECHANISMS WITH ADJACENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Without incorporated cities in Echols County no Memorandums of Agreement concerning the potential for intergovernmental conflicts for Land Use Intensity Subject to Annexation are needed. As noted above, Echols County is served by a planning advisory commission, which monitors and implements the future land use plan. Potential for other development affecting Echols County would be addressed by the Developments of Regional Impact Review Process (DRI) contained within the Georgia Planning Act.

### **SCHOOL BOARD COORDINATION**

Echols County is served by a single school system, the Echols County Board of Education. All local land development ordinances call for siting approval for new facilities from the Echols County, and all countywide public schools are located in the area known as Statenville.

### **SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICTS**

Echols County has no special service districts.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Echols County has one independent development authority outlined in Table 7-1 below.

**Table 7-1**  
**Echols County Authorities**

<b>Authority Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Method of Creation</b>	<b>Dependency</b>	<b>Single or Multi-Jurisdictional</b>
Echols, Lanier, Berrien, Clinch Lowndes Joint Development Authority	Multi-County Industrial Development	General Statute	Independent	Multi-Jurisdictional

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

While each authority is eligible for grant and loan programs, local control is maintained by the fact that the elected governmental bodies appoint each authority's membership and approve annual funding allocations in their budget. Coordination with these authorities is currently maintained through the chief elected official of the respective local government.

### **ECHOLS COUNTY SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY**

In 1995, the Georgia Legislature passed the Service Delivery Strategy Law (H.B. 489) that mandated the development of a local mechanism to encourage coordination of service delivery. Echols County developed such a coordinating mechanism, and have reviewed the agreement; amended one section and submitted certification to Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

### **ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS**

Upon inventory and assessment, Echols County believes that current coordination mechanisms are sufficient to meet county needs throughout the twenty-year planning period. The respective jurisdictions are active participants in the Georgia Intergovernmental Review Process, the requirements of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI), and routinely are represented at South Georgia Regional Development Center board meetings and functions.

Should issues arise Echols County feel they cannot adequately handle, they will approach the appropriate Authority/governmental authority to institute appropriate communications and mediate the dispute.

## **PART II: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE ?**

### **IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES & GOALS AND POLICIES**

#### **IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

##### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Echols County, as the historical sketch in Chapter Three explains, has a rich heritage. Early settlements sprang up from turpentine and sawmill operations, which prompted settlement patterns. Some of these settlements formed the basis for Statenville today and some have either disappeared or provide the link to the past and are now inhabited by farm/non-farm persons. Throughout the years, development in the county has brought with it farm and forest related structures, including several churches. Even without a comprehensive countywide inventory, many buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects of historical importance are present in Echols County. But no governmental actions have been taken to provide protective steps towards preservation of the vast majority of these historic resources.

To bring Echols County into the fold of protecting the historic resources an umbrella organization called the Echols County Historical Society has emerged and is taking steps to preserve historical resources in Echols County. One of the Historical Society's goal will be the completion of a comprehensive survey of historic resources for the entire county. Once the survey is complete, Echols County will know what and where the historic resources are and they can decide how to preserve them. With this information, the Historical Society can then begin targeting specific structures or areas for potential National Register nominations and recommend the necessity to create local historic districts. The Historical Society could also use this information as a basis for seminars to educate owners of historic resources about their buildings and how they relate to their surroundings.

The Historical Society could also promote the protection of historic resources by making historic property owners aware of state and federal programs such as tax benefits and grants. It could also designate local historic districts and write an ordinance creating a historic preservation commission that would protect these local districts through a review process that includes any changes to the exterior of buildings located in the district. The task force could also serve as a catalyst for the formation of other groups interested in historic preservation.

Preservation of Echols County's historic resources will require an organized effort such as the one described. With the existence of the Historical Society, many accomplishments can be made, but without it, little will get done and in a piecemeal manner Echols County's heritage will disappear forever. It is of great importance that Echols County continue to support the efforts of the Historical Society.. It should be noted that for the historic preservation goals to be met, the county government must endorse the concept of historic preservation by staying involved in the Historical Society and by having representatives as members of the group.

##### **POPULATION AND ECONOMY**

Echols County's population, social, economic and environmental profile has been and will continue to be influenced by four major factors: (1) Echols County is a bedroom county, which increased in population by 60 percent from 1990 to 2000. Eighty-five percent of the work force commutes to jobs in Lowndes County or Florida and most retail and service sector needs are located outside Echols County; (2) Rural farm population continues to decline due to mechanization and competition; and (3) Commercial forest land encompassing nearly 95% of the land area will continue to provide forest product resources; (4) There is a natural scarcity of developable lands due to high water table and wetlands and there is also a reluctance to parcel properties.

Echols County possesses a myriad of natural resources, which are intact, and in a system with few or no enforced development regulations (i.e., land subdivision and zoning ordinances) to safeguard said resources for future generations. The vast majority of soils (if detailed soil surveys were completed) would be rated "poor" which means the caution flag is raised and only in a few instances with special on-site system designs could engineering, higher

expenditures, and large lot areas be utilized to overcome the soil deficiencies. Therefore, until a countywide health inspection of all existing septic systems is conducted, the general public will not understand the actual need for the present sanitary system code enforcement program or the need to construct a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in densely settled areas such as Statenville.

Current data provides continuing evidence that shows the economy of Echols County is not keeping even with regional growth centers, and lagging behind the State of Georgia and the United States. Echols County seeks to remain a rural bedroom county with an emphasis on family values; preserve the commercial forest lands; commute to work in adjacent counties; and purchase retail supplies and services in Lowndes County. The resultant impact limits the governing officials to provide few services.

Most residents of Echols County are committed to this rural lifestyle and as a consequence Echols County ranks ninth with the highest percentage of persons below poverty (28.7 percent) of all nine counties in the South Georgia region. Ten years ago the percentage of persons below poverty was the lowest of the South Georgia region at 14.7 percent, but seasonal farm labor accounted for half of the decennial population increase and this impacted the income and poverty numbers. It also means that Echols County's per capita income has decreased from 61.5 percent to 57.5 percent of the state per capita income since 1979 to 1999 and declined to 54.2 percent of the United States per capita income average. Echols County's educational attainment level of 60.5 percent of its adult population having a high school or higher education (Georgia's average is 78.6 percent and the U. S. average is 80.3 percent), illustrates how Echols County can compete in today's work force market and maintain their rural lifestyle. Education of the present and future workforce is considered the primary need in Echols County. Various types of training and manpower programs are necessary to insure that the workforce continues to have the capability to be competitive in obtaining specialized jobs that may become available within the commuting trade area during the twenty-year planning period.

Education, in Echols County has been and will continue to be a very important element in the preparation of their children for their futures. Throughout the nation, the critical link between education and prosperity is being realized. Gains in the level of educational attainment mean a more skilled labor force, and a drop in the number of students who do not complete their schooling. This in turn reduces the out-migration, because the skill levels of the work force compliment the employers' needs. Current programs for keeping children in school and teaching them the value of vocational education, job training before and after they graduate, will continue to be reinforced by the general public and the institutional community.

## **COUNTY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Chapter Four has inventoried, analyzed and made recommendations concerning the county facilities and services. The heart and soul of a county's ability to serve the public depends upon the financial capability of providing public infrastructure and services. These include: county governmental services, public safety, fire protection, emergency medical service, health care, electric distribution systems, solid waste management, transportation (roads, railroads, aviation), recreation, cultural facilities, and educational facilities. In most cases facilities and services tend to be a reflection of a county's values and priorities, and therefore, plays an important role in stimulating growth and establishing the county's form of development.

For any business to be successful in the long term and operate in a fiscally sound manner, it must prepare an annual and long-range business plan. Counties are "public corporations," which are intended to last a long time and should therefore, plan accordingly. Echols County's present investment (buildings, roads, equipment, etc..) in their infrastructure and services is of a magnitude greater than most private businesses. Since the benefactors of each of these public corporations are not a small group of private individuals, but rather all of Echols County's citizens, then it is essential for this corporation to be managed responsibly.

However, Echols County does not currently have the mind-set (county policies, framework, i.e. process) for the preparation and implementation of a long-term capital improvement program, which is one sound method of long-range business planning for local governments. For the most part, on an annual basis with whatever information is readily available, a budget is prepared and priorities are selected and funds are expended. Without preliminary engineering and architectural feasibility studies with complete cost estimates for each and every project which also show total long-term revenue needs, operation and maintenance costs, each unit of government annually prepares a budget that addresses its most immediate and known needs and no long-range strategies are developed.

With a known scarcity of fiscal resources and a multitude of needed facilities and services it becomes necessary to institute a capital improvement program process at the county level. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 sets out the parameters that allow the units of government to commence such a capital budgeting process and Echols County should use their individual five-year short-term work program as the springboard for their capital improvement program.

## **HOUSING**

The housing element of the plan is based to a large extent on the findings of the population element. Population projections indicate moderate growth over the next 25 years amounting to 33 persons and 12 housing units per year. Within the housing element, Echols County needs to consider the following factors while formulating goals and strategies for their comprehensive plan:

1. Echols County should commence programmatic efforts to redevelop and rehabilitate substandard housing through the use of state and federal housing rehabilitation programs. While there appears to be many units requiring exterior rehabilitation, there are also ample units that need electrical and mechanical upgrades to meet minimum housing and building codes.
2. The proportion of persons in the 65 and above age groups is expected to increase slightly from 9 percent to 12 percent of the total population throughout the planning period. The 45 to 64 age groups is slated to rise and these trends often account for a decrease in the number of persons per dwelling unit. Together these trends have tremendous implications for the provision of housing, since elderly housing has to address the special needs of elderly homeowners and renters. Besides being on a fixed income, they have physical limitations, and often need supportive services.
3. Echols County's housing mix has shifted towards a higher percentage of mobile homes, which have become the dominantly attractive means of affordable housing. With a moderate-growth population, and a proportionately low acreage of developed commercial and industrial lands, this has negatively impacted the residential tax base. If left unchanged, this trend could have alarming impacts on fiscal resources. However, without adequate subdivision controls, development regulations, and strategies for in-fill development and rehabilitation of existing site-built housing, this trend will not change.
4. Echols County needs to address the type of housing from the tax revenue basis, but also the location of housing. The natural resources and land use elements show the need to determine if rural non-farm residences are located on soils, which are not capable of supporting on-site sanitary sewer systems. It is suspected that widespread effluent contamination prevails throughout the rural subdivisions. This places public health in jeopardy and begs public officials to enact appropriate codes and ordinances to govern the division of land, location of residences, and the construction of wells and on-site sewage systems.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The inventory and analysis found in Chapter Three explains the attributes of the soils, surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, watersheds, aquifers, groundwater recharge areas, river corridor protection, endangered species, recreational resources, farm and forest lands, scenic views and sites. The capability of the soils to support a myriad of land uses was analyzed using a 1996 report prepared by the U. S. Geological Survey and the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Ten major soil associations, and a general soil association map were developed. The generalized maps have undergone review by the Echols County Planning Advisory Commission. The needs are as follows:

1. Echols County needs a detailed soil survey. USDA needs to bend their policies and publish the detailed soils already mapped for the western one-third of Echols County and then program the eventual completion of the rest of the county. The detailed soils surveys were benefit general county management and the continuing planning process.
2. The comprehensive plan needs to reinforce the necessity to utilize the detailed soil survey but can only at this point in time utilize the general soil association areas shown on Map 3-9 and at least

suggest development to the more suitable soil associations. The Land Use Plan should guide development to areas capable of supporting development while the Health Code and other development regulations need to address the current site and situation. If future development is steered away from the soil associations with severe constraints and promoted to soil associations that are suitable for the proposed development, than a win-win situation exists for man and the environment.

3. Item number two above presupposes development decisions are conducted within the public forum. This public involvement is nearly non-existent with health and building codes being enforced, but there are no development regulations i.e. subdivision, zoning, etc., adopted and enforced in Echols County.
4. Echols County has an extremely large forest and thriving farming economy. Echols County will take whatever measures necessary, including the adoption of the comprehensive plan, to protect these natural resources for future generations.
5. The groundwater recharge areas depicted on Map 3-2 are located in the northwest quadrant along GA. 135 and in the extreme southwest corner. Development regulations have been enacted in conformance with Georgia's environmental criteria to protect these sensitive areas.
6. Development should avoid flood hazard areas because of high development costs, potential damage to private property and its associated potential public costs, and damage to the ecosystem within the floodplain. Echols County has never been mapped for flood hazards. Since new flood hazard map documentation may take several years to accomplish, it is incumbent upon developers to provide engineering documentation that show their proposed developments will not adversely impact a floodplain. New development regulations can spell out necessary language to protect the public liability.
7. Wetlands fall under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977. This Act prohibits the discharge of dredge or fill materials into the water bodies or wetlands of the United States unless a permit is granted. Before a landowner starts a proposed development he is required to ascertain wetlands applicability. He should be advised to obtain a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Echols County has adopted a Wetlands Protection Ordinance in conformance with the Georgia environmental criteria. (the 404 permit is required prior to the county permit for development in wetlands)
8. The Alapaha and Suwannee River Corridors are included in the River Corridors Protection Ordinance adopted by Echols County in conformance with the Georgia environmental criteria.
9. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resource Division-Georgia Natural Heritage Program has inventoried plant and animal species in the State of Georgia. Table 3-5: Endangered or Threatened Plant and Animal Species identifies these plants and animals.
10. Particular attention needs to be focused on two impaired stream segments, namely Toms Creek and Mud Creek. Total maximum daily load implementation plans have been prepared dealing with dissolved oxygen and fecal coliform (Map 3-5 depicts the location of the impaired stream segments).

## LAND USE

In theory, a local unit of government should consult its comprehensive plan when making land development decisions or reacting to state or federal mandates to ensure or test whether their decisions are in harmony with the goals and policies articulated in its Comprehensive Plan. The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan can be achieved with the help of a number of tools. The pattern, timing, and standards of development within any county can be influenced and guided in accordance with the comprehensive plan in several ways. Non-regulatory measures include the use of incentives to promote certain types of uses, educational meetings and hearings, voluntary persuasive measures, and intergovernmental coordination. Regulatory measures, such as adopting a building permit code, building construction code, subdivision control ordinance, housing, electrical and plumbing codes and a zoning ordinance are common actions taken to influence and safeguard local land use patterns.

While all these codes, ordinances, and regulations are often viewed as restrictions on private property owners, they do have positive benefits for land investment, besides protecting the public health, safety and welfare. These



regulations insure that all property owners develop their land according to a common set of standards. The land investment value perceived lost when private development options are limited is returned to the property owner when the limitations prevent neighboring properties from being developed for incompatible uses.

To begin to protect the public health, safety and general welfare, the Echols County has formed a planning advisory commission in 2004 to update the 2015 Echols County Comprehensive Plan and the Solid Waste Management Plan. The Planning Advisory Commission will undertake the implementation of the comprehensive plan and advise the County Commission on needed ordinances and enforcement programs to establish the pattern, timing, and standards of development in Echols County. Development of other codes and ordinances such as land subdivision and zoning would rely upon the acceptance of the general public and the County Commission.

## **SUMMARY**

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and subsequent amended guidelines with minimum planning standards, procedures, and environmental criteria has given each local unit of government in Georgia a choice: (1) Prepare and adopt an individual or joint comprehensive plan according to state guidelines and maintain "qualified local government status", or (2) take everything under advisement and do nothing. The second option places the local government in a status, which will jeopardize its chances to receive state and federal grant assistance.

Echols County will: (1) continue participating in the Growth Strategies planning process and see the Plan to completion and adoption, and at least every ten years routinely update or amend the Plan; and (2) assess their current regulatory tools, including but not limited to building, land subdivision, floodplain management ordinances, zoning, soil erosion and sedimentation ordinances, Health Department regulations, etc., and ascertain which tools currently are supportive or divisive in implementing its comprehensive plan. Where falling short regulatory programs should be added to achieve stated goals and policies. These regulatory tools should also be critically analyzed in light of the State's environmental planning criteria, and appropriate measures should be adopted to insure local compliance with state standards.

It is further suggested that like the preparation of the updated Echols County Comprehensive Plan was guided by a planning advisory commission, that said county planning advisory commission be empowered, and charged with keeping the Echols County Comprehensive Plan alive, and working towards the implementation of its goals, policies and short-term work program.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### INTRODUCTION

The Echols County planning process has reached the stage where the citizens and staff have reviewed impacts and opportunities and recommended the preparation of goals and policies that will provide the general framework for the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan. The Impacts and Opportunities summary also recommended further studies be undertaken in all of the six planning elements, which could insure moderate growth. The Echols County Goals and Policies will address these findings and actual programs will be included in the Five Year Short-Term Work Program, which will make investments to strengthen Echols County's long-term economic base.

A "goal" should be viewed as an outcome or end towards which the eventual realization of plans, development policies and programs are targeted. An example of a land use goal could be a statement that would call for the wise use, protection, or rational development of a given county characteristic. The goal is carried to fruition through guidance by the land use plan, by carrying out scheduled public construction projects, and in certain instances by land development codes and ordinances.

A "policy" is a definite strategy or course of action, which will ensure that the goals are realized. By nature, a policy becomes a tool embodied in both the plan and ordinances derived to carry out the plan. However, policies are useful only so long as they are well formulated and carefully reflect county goals. A well-conceived list of policies provides a basic framework for decision makers.

Finally, it is assumed that some persons reviewing the goals and policies contained in the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan will feel they are "pie in the sky" types of statements. Without specific program objectives, which are presented in the five-year short-term work program, this would be an accurate comment. As someone once said, "When you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there". The goals and policies provide the definition of where we're trying to go in Echols County and the Short Term Work Program shows how they are going to get there.

The Goals and Policies are premised on the use of the Echols County Planning Advisory Commission.

- (1) Echols County will continue to empower the Echols County Planning Advisory Commission to implement the comprehensive plan. The South Georgia RDC could provide on-going technical assistance services to help the Echols County Planning Advisory Commission implement the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan.

### GOAL 1:

**Echols County should consist of a Rural Service Area. Persons choosing Echols County's rural lifestyle should not expect to receive urban services other than transportation and public safety.**

#### RURAL SERVICE AREA (RSA)

In the Rural Service Area, agriculture and commercial forestry should be given first priority. This Rural Service Area can contain other secondary uses including specialized agricultural uses such as processing facilities, sod farms, truck farms, nurseries, plant farms, recreational areas, and forested tracts. The Rural Service Area promotes the concentration of neighborhood activity centers (NAC) in existing and proposed subdivisions at densities which range from lots with private wells to lots that are serviced by a community-type domestic water supply, but not a joint sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. These NAC's function for those persons who prefer larger than urban lot sizes and densities, and they never require the public provision of the full range of urban services. It becomes imperative that future NAC's in the RSA be developed on soils which have few to no limitations for septic tanks and drain fields. Extreme caution should be exercised in Echols County, because there are predominately moderate and severely limited soil associations throughout the county.

Commercial forestry and agriculture should be considered an exclusive land use. Forested and agricultural areas, which have prime farm and forestlands and substantial investments, should be protected from further encroachment by non-agricultural uses. Protection from encroachment should involve actions on many fronts including exclusive-use zoning, restrictions on public works projects that are unrelated to agriculture and forestry, and relief from special assessments and environmental ordinances not related to public health and safety.

**GOAL 2:**

**Promote the clustering of compatible land uses within existing neighborhoods.**

**Policy 2.1:**

The County shall adopt/or amend appropriate Land Development Regulations by 2007 to provide standards, including minimum and maximum density standards, for a Neighborhood Activity Center. They will be depicted on the Future Land Use Map for the county.

**Policy 2.1.1:**

The **Neighborhood Activity Center** is intended to fulfill the following purposes:

This area provides for concentration of neighborhood-serving commercial, office, residential, recreational and cultural facilities, at intensities compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Although some Neighborhood Activity Centers may be composed of a single type of use, a mixture of land uses is specifically encouraged. These activity centers are intended for locations where lower level thoroughfares and collectors are available, with linkage to the arterial system.

**Policy 2.2:**

County development should be responsive to the social, economic and environmental needs of its' citizens. For this reason, the County should prepare and implement plans consistent with the following guidelines:

- (a) Local services, such as schools, police and fire protection, public streets, drainage, and parks should be planned to be adequate for the population and employment densities anticipated. Areas of the county where local services are available should be developed first. New land should be opened for urbanization in a staged, contiguous manner through a coordinated program of public service extensions. Existing facilities, including schools, should be used to full capacity. Cooperative arrangements between service districts should be made if necessary. Where practical, investment in all services, including schools, shall be consistent with the Echols County land use plan.
- (b) County development should be compatible with features of the natural environment, including the soils, hydrologic system, and not intrude into prime farm and forestlands.
- (c) County development should promote a variety of housing types and services.
- (d) Density of development should be planned to be consistent with the capacity of the County's services, state and federal environmental standards; and the continuation of forestry and agricultural activities on forest and farmlands not programmed for non-farm expansion.
- (e) Encourage the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas.
- (f) Encourage the elimination or reduction of uses consistent with the county's character and future land use.

- (g) Ensure the protection and preservation of historic resources.
- (h) Discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl.
- (i) Protect viable and stable neighborhoods from uses not in keeping with their established character and use.

**GOAL 3:**

**Foster the continuance of long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economy in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.**

**Policy 3.1:**

Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance.

**Policy 3.2:**

Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged through the creation of the Echols County Industrial Development Authority and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments.

**Policy 3.3**

Echols County should actively pursue the development of a public industrial park and the provision of a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the Statenville area.

**Policy 3.4:**

Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.

**GOAL 4:**

**Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating industrial personnel needs.**

**Policy 4.1:**

Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.

**Policy 4.2:**

Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.

**GOAL 5:**

**Ensure that all people within Echols County have access to adequate and affordable housing.**

**Policy 5.1:**

Housing development agenda in Echols County should assess the changing needs of the elderly, low and moderate-income families, minorities, handicapped, and developmentally disabled persons.

**GOAL 6:**

**Ensure in a equitable manner that existing residential structures and neighborhoods are preserved, improved and maintained.**

**Policy 6.1:**

Neighborhood redevelopment projects should seek to conserve, rehabilitate, or relocate existing housing structures, in lieu of demolition, whenever it is feasible.

**Policy 6.2:**

The county is encouraged to adopt, enforce, revise and update building codes where applicable as to permit new concepts in building technology.

**Policy 6.3:**

Low interest loans and tax reduction activities or other alternatives should be developed to promote rehabilitation of existing housing.

**GOAL 7:**

**Design and maintain a network of thoroughfares for safe and efficient movement of people and goods which are linked to and coordinated with rail, air, and other transportation terminals.**

**Policy 7.1:**

The carrying capacity of roadways should preserve the functional purpose of the road system to assure that the transportation network functions as originally intended.

**Policy 7.2:**

Land development, access, and circulation should be closely coordinated in the design of highway and road facilities in order to preserve the traffic carrying ability/safety aspects of highways and roads.

**Policy 7.3:**

Early acquisition of needed highway rights-of-way and access controls should be sought to minimize land costs, prevent undesirable development, and preclude land speculation.

**Policy 7.4:**

Costs of roadway construction should be justified by utilization and need.

**GOAL 8:**

**Establish and maintain conservation of areas where natural processes would be endangered by development (i.e. in floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, drainageways, etc.).**

**Policy 8.1:**

Areas where critical natural processes would be endangered by development should be avoided. The areas most directly impacted include drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.

**Policy 8.2:**

An adequate minimum flow and water quality should be maintained in all rivers and streams to ensure a productive fish habitat and protection of aquatic life and scenic qualities.

**Policy 8.3:**

Development should not pollute, exhaust or interfere with the natural replenishment cycles of groundwater.

**Policy 8.4:**

State or federal agency rules and regulations mandating local enforcement programs should be accompanied with adequate staff and financial assistance to help local units in their implementation programs. These include local floodplain management requirements, soil and sedimentation control requirements, wetlands protection, river corridors, and similar laws designed to prevent degradation of the natural environment. Ongoing public awareness and education activities should also be developed to encourage participation in natural resource preservation and other related activities. Agencies that currently offer educational material on the conservation and protection of natural resources are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Pollution Assistance Division (P2AD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), etc.

**Policy 8.5:**

Development should not grossly impair the functioning of vital natural systems. Land use should be primarily determined by natural characteristics i.e. the suitability of the land to accommodate the planned use.

**Policy 8.6:**

Lands that are not suitable for on-site absorption systems should not be subdivided/developed unless public sewers are available or other provisions are made for the handling of sewage.

**Policy 8.7:**

Treatment facilities should be available for the discharge of septic tank, holding tank and recreational vehicle pumpage.

**Policy 8.8:**

Soil resources should be managed in a manner that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality.

**Policy 8.9:**

Best Management Practices that minimize siltation and pollution should be utilized. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Approval of grading, filling, and excavation plans by the county to ensure that erosion and siltation are minimized. (Examples: sodding, seeding, re-vegetation schedules, etc.).
- (b) Provide and maintain strategically located settling basins to remove silt and debris from surface water runoff.

**GOAL 9:**

**Echols County will limit development in the Rural Service Area to uses and intensities which will not require the county or developers to provide urban or suburban levels of utilities and services.**

**Policy 9.1:**

Allocate with the Land Use Plan an adequate amount of lands to meet projected land use demands.

**Policy 9.2:**

County plan implementation tools will include a sanitation code, building code, subdivision control and zoning ordinances.

**Policy 9.3:**

Lands shall be deemed unsuitable for any proposed development by the local unit of government if the land is largely affected by any of the following:

- wetlands
- aquifer recharge areas
- flood hazards
- inadequate drainage
- adverse soil conditions
- severe erosion potential
- unfavorable topography
- inadequate water supply or sewerage disposal capabilities
- any other feature likely to be harmful to the health or welfare of the future residents of the proposed development

**GOAL 10:**

**Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of cultural resources in Echols County.**

**Policy 10.1:**

Areas, structures and districts of significant architectural and historic value should be so designated and approved by Echols County. Preservation techniques, including local designation through local historic district ordinance, should be encouraged. Additional techniques to support these activities include various state and federal programs including historic register listings, and tax incentive credit.

**Policy 10.2:**

Develop a public awareness/education element to encourage participation in preservation activities.

**Policy 10.3:**

Echols County should preserve and protect for future generations their scenic, cultural, historic landscapes, buildings and archaeological sites. Special management practices should be applied to those areas possessing unique natural, cultural or historic features.

**GOAL 11:**

**Preserve lands suitable for all agricultural pursuits, including farming, forestry and soil conservation.**

**Policy 11.1:**

Where soil productivity is high and where conditions are better suited for agriculture and forestry measures should be developed to preserve such land for agricultural/forestry uses.

**Policy 11.2:**

Non-agricultural-forestry uses, which generally include a broad range of urban land use types, should not intrude into rural areas best suited for agricultural/forestry uses.



## PART III: HOW DO WE GET THERE ?

### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN & SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM

#### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A future land use plan reflects the consensus of county values that are inherent in goal and policy statements. It is designed to provide a summary of recommended growth patterns, which are depicted on the respective future land use map. For Echols County the recommendations are designed to reflect goals and policies with strong emphasis on local government's provision of basic services: transportation and public safety. (The land use goals and policies are detailed in "Part II - Where Do We Want To Be ?".) These plan concepts propose land use patterns which take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure. This prevents undue hardship on a local government to provide unnecessary infrastructure improvements or additions. When growth is planned in a logical and straightforward manner and takes advantage of public investments, there will be positive benefits for all with an increase in long-term financial stability.

#### ECHOLS COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE

In general, Echols County contains a dominant pattern of active agriculture/forestry uses, which will continue through the 20-year-planning period. Echols County is designated a **Rural Service Area (RSA)**. The communities of Statenville, Howell and Mayday are designated **Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC)**. Future residential, commercial, industrial, and public/institutional development is encouraged to cluster within these NAC's. The plan, includes enforcement of building and sanitary codes to enhance the rural quality of life desired in Echols County. The plan will conserve agriculture/forested land as the mainstay of the county's economy. Therefore, future land use designations for Echols County are generally the same as existing with most vacant lands being given a future land use designation appropriate to their surroundings. Map III-1 depicts future land use designations and **Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC)** boundaries for Echols County.

All of unincorporated Echols County is designated a Rural Service Area (RSA) because there are no existing nor proposed public water and sewer services. The agriculture/forested areas shown on Map 6-1 Echols County Existing Land Use will promote exclusive development for agriculture, agribusiness and commercial forestry in an effort to protect the valuable natural resource from intrusion and destruction. All agriculture and forestry uses should utilize best management practices and locate where soil conditions, drainage, etc. is best suited for their use. Other development constraints such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas and floodplains should also dictate their location. Non-agriculture/forestry uses will be encouraged to locate inside a NAC or within vacant subdivided areas.

Future residential land demand for an additional 295 housing units will require at a bare minimum between 300 and 400 acres. The plan recommends in-filling and clustering uses within the NACs, namely Howell, Mayday and Statenville. There are some attempts at unregulated subdivisions for residential use within the rural area, far from any designated or planned services. Further development of these should be secondary to development of forestry and agricultural uses. Many are not suitable for development due to poor soils, wetlands, or groundwater recharge areas, and these should revert back to their original agriculture/forest usage. The county will pursue adoption of land subdivision regulations, which addresses these priorities.

Future Commercial, Industrial and Public/Institutional uses in particular should locate in the Statenville NAC. Echols County anticipates the need for an addition of 5 acres of commercial land, 75 acres of industrial land, and 10 acres of public/institutional land.

Future Parks/Recreation/Conservation uses include existing uses, plus the 400-foot conservation corridors along the designated Alapaha and the Suwannee Rivers, per the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act of 1991, to maintain water quality, habitat for wildlife, and preserve the floodplains. As discussed in Chapter Four, Echols County does not plan to add additional developed parkland, because the designation of their two protected river corridors affects 1,594 acres of passive recreation uses.

Future Transportation/Communication/Utilities will remain significantly the same as existing. Due to projected moderate growth and encouraged concentration of new development in designated NACs, no other significant expansions of the road systems are anticipated in the unincorporated area through the 20-year planning period. Existing public rights-of-way within the county will be upgraded in accordance with an established priority system within a very limited budget.

Many areas within Echols County contain environmentally sensitive features, which must be considered when making development decisions. Therefore, all new development or redevelopment shall be subject to the following development constraints: floodplains, wetlands, soil suitability, and groundwater recharge areas. These constraints shall be reviewed on a site-by-site basis and shall take precedence when making development or land use approvals/decisions. The future land use map should be consulted when reviewing land use changes or proposed development and redevelopment. However, land use designations on the future land use map are for general purposes and will be considered secondary to these development constraints.

While Echols County does not contain an abundance of existing vacant uses nor subdivided lands, there are ample acreages for development throughout the 20-year planning period. This means a coordinated infill development policy needs to be implemented and regarded as a priority for any new development.

The summary of future land use acreage needs between 2005 and 2025 is as follows:

	Existing Acres	2025 Ac.Needs	Totals
Residential	2221.8	400	2,621.8
Commercial	24.1	5.0	29.1
Industrial	114.9	75.0	189.9
Public/Insti.	94.0	10.0	104.0
Park/Rec/Con.	1,605.8	-0-	1,605.8
Tran/Com/Ut	888.2	20.0	908.2
Agriculture	16,614.5	-110-	16,504.5
Forested	250,003.0	-206.3-	249,796.7
Undev/unused	193.7	-193.7	-0-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>271,760.0</b>	<b>510.0</b>	<b>271,760.0</b>

### **FY 2005 - FY 2009 SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Short-Term Work Program is to provide a detailed listing of the various projects and programs recommended by Echols County for implementation during the first five years covered in the "2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan". By scheduling major county initiatives and capital expenditures in advance over a period of years, the five-year work programs will assist the county in undertaking activities to implement their comprehensive plan and achieve their goals. The 1999-2004 Report of Accomplishments precedes the proposed 2005-2009 Short-Term Work Program to inform the public of the status of activities undertaken in the last five years.

The Short-Term Work Program should be linked to and coordinated with the county's annual operating budget. The majority of the elements of the work program require direct county expenditures or indirect costs through allocation of county employees. Therefore, implementation of the Plan's goals, policies, and recommendations are tied to the annual budget. Attempts to implement the Plan should: (1) review recommendations in the Short-Term Work Program for the upcoming year; (2) revise the recommendations based on current information; and (3) transfer the recommended items that require local funding to the respective annual operating budget. With this approach, Echols County will be able to systematically implement their comprehensive plan.

## Echols County: Report of Accomplishments

Community Facilities		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Construct a paved walking trail at Recreation Dept. site utilizing grant funds the county will provide (\$2,500 cash match)	Not Accomplished	State grant dollars were not available for this project
Construct a concession at Recreation Department site	Completed	
Construct a satellite volunteer fire station in the Mayday-Howell area (northwest section of the county)	Completed	
Construct a volunteer fire station at the Wrights Chapel (southwest section of the county)	Completed	The fire station was constructed at the Coggins Farm location in the southwest part of Echols County
Seek transit funding for a van to be used for transportation by the county and the school	Not Accomplished	Priorities changed and this project was not pursued
Prepare plans and cost estimates to remodel the courtroom of the Courthouse	Completed	
Study need for energy efficient windows throughout the Courthouse	Completed	
With assistance of the LARP program of Ga. DOT, explore the feasibility of paving Coggins Farm Road and Melrose Rd.	Underway	The funding package will include DOT and EDA and alignment changes to J. Frank Culpepper Rd.
With assistance of LARP program of Ga. DOT, explore the feasibility of resurfacing J. Frank Culpepper Road from Bethel Road to Highway 135	Completed	
Request DOT assistance in reconfiguring Highway 94 at the intersection of Sardis Church Road	Postponed	DOT found the approximate costs were greater than the need for reconfiguring
Install dry fire hydrants in strategic locations within the county	Completed	
Continue monitoring of timber sold in the County for Timber Tax purpose by Tax Assessor	Completed	
Seek funding to purchase the old Statenville Park for restoration	Not Accomplished	County gained title to the property from DOT, but do not plan to restore the facility
Seek funding to acquire and establish a recreation site in Mayday on the Alapaha River	Completed	

Economic Development		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Investigate the feasibility of constructing a new state, federal, or private prison in Echols County	Not Accomplished	No interest was shown especially without adequate infrastructure, i.e water and sanitary sewers
Investigate the purchase and development of an industrial park	Underway	Movement on this issue was discussed and a part-time economic developer was hired to locate land and new industries
Prospect for new industries to place in new industrial park	Underway	
Develop plans and explore funding for a public canning facility	Not Accomplished	Grass roots supporters waned and no action was undertaken
Research financial incentives to enhance and further develop the current expanding/growing produce industry in the county	Completed	

Land Use		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Adopt ordinances pertaining to groundwater recharge areas and wetlands protection	Completed	
Adopt an ordinance to meet the provisions of the "River Corridor Protection Act of 1991" for the Alapaha and Suwannee River corridors	Completed	
Adopt a county ordinance to enforce the eight mandatory state construction codes	Completed	

Prepare and adopt a subdivision control ordinance	Postponed	The County Commission chose to not address the land subdivision ordinance. Will be addressed in CY 2005, 2006
Prepare and adopt a zoning ordinance, which assists in implementing the Echols County Future Land Use Plan	Postponed	The County Commission did not have the votes to even consider action. Land development ordinances will be addressed in CY 06,07

Natural and Historic Resources		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Seek grants to assist the Echols County Historical Society with the development of a museum of local history	Underway	
Seek grants to assist the Echols County Historical Society with the restoration of the log house in Statenville	Completed	
Continue to participate with the Echols County Historical Society	Completed	
Conduct a county-wide historic resources inventory	Postponed	This historic resources survey will be attempted in CY 07, 08

General Planning		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Annually re-evaluate the Short-Term Work Program	Completed	
Participate in all updates to the 2015 Echols County Comprehensive Plan	Completed	
Prepare all grant/loan applications (CDBG, EDA, RD, etc.) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	Completed	
Continue working towards developing the policies and legislation necessary to increase the number of county commission board members from 3 to 5	Postponed	The past county commission took no action and passed this onto the new county commission
Endorse and help develop a county planning advisory commission and provide representation	Completed	
Maintain annual mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments	Completed	
Continue an intergovernmental agreement to cost-share on code enforcement programs	Completed	

### Echols County: Short Term Work Program Update

Community Facilities				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Seek grant funds to construct a paved walking trail at Recreation Dept.	2006, 2007	County Commission	\$12,500	LAWCON, General Fund
Prepare plans and cost estimates to remodel the courtroom	2005, 2006	County Commission	\$2,000	General Fund
With assistance of Ga. DOT pave Coggins Farm Road and add shoulders J. Frank Culpepper Road	2005, 2006	County Commission	\$7M	EDA, DCA-EIP, Private, County
Prepare preliminary engineering plans and cost estimates for a sanitary sewer collection/treatment system for the Statenville area, County school, and new industrial park	2005, 2006	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	\$1,000,000	RD, CDBG, Revenue Bonds
Resurface Tince Road from SR 376 to J. Frank Culpepper Road (3 miles)	2005	County Commission	N/A	Ga. DOT-LARP

Economic Development				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Re-structure the Echols County Industrial Development Authority to serve as the public catalyst with taxing powers for economic development	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	N/A	General Fund
Continue the part-time services of an economic developer	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	\$20,000/y	General Fund
Investigate the purchase of a public industrial park	2005, 2006	County Commission	\$15-25,000	General Fund
Develop the public industrial park with infrastructure (roads, water, sanitary sewer, etc.)	2006, 2007, 2008	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	N/A	EDA, RD, DCA, General Fund
Continue to prospect for new industries to place in the industrial park	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	N/A	General Fund
Continue to research financial incentives to further develop and expand existing industries in the county	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	N/A	General Fund

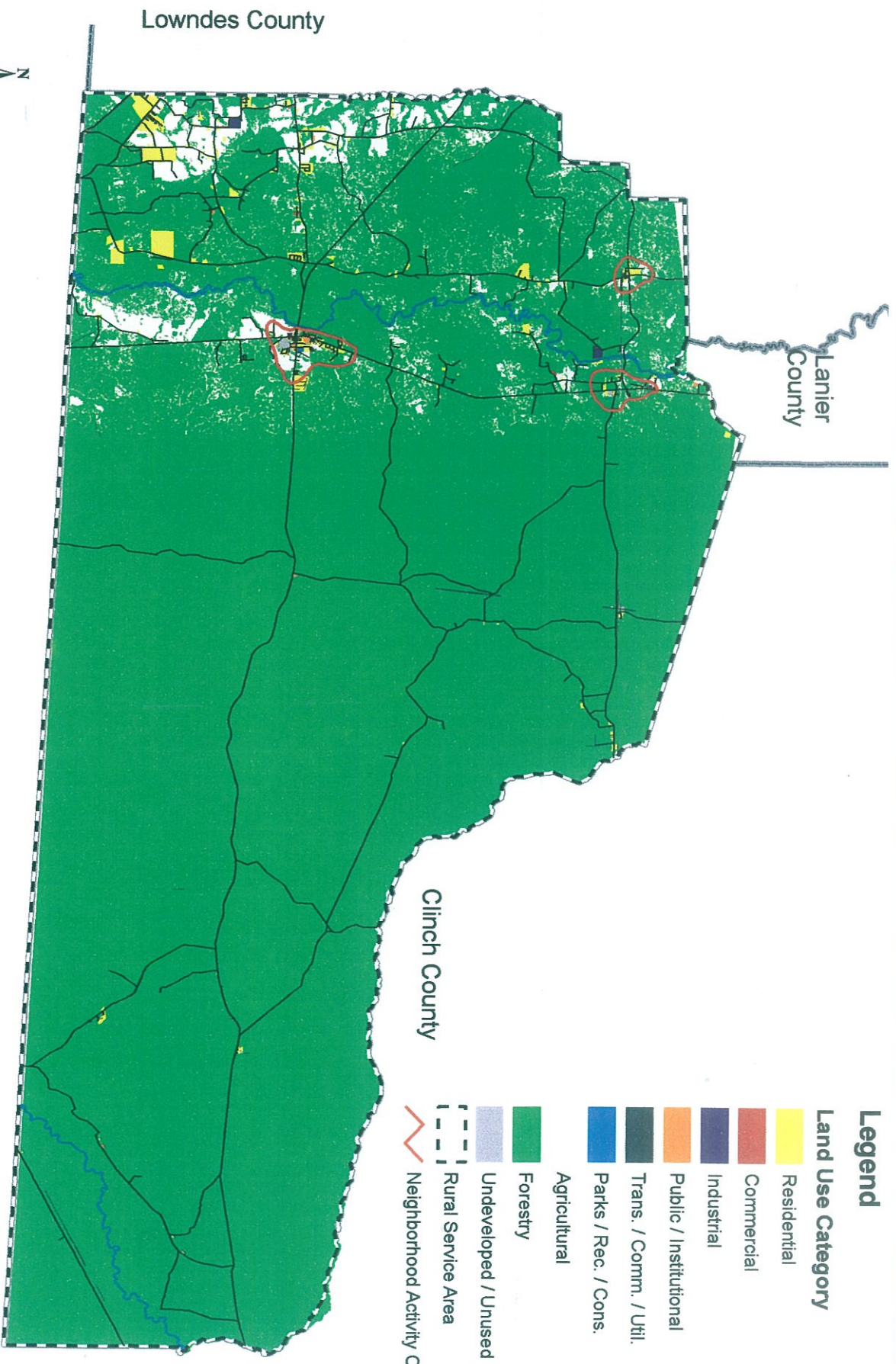
Land Use				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to enforce the eight mandatory state construction codes	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	Fee based	Permit costs
Prepare and adopt a land subdivision ordinance	2005, 2006	County Commission	\$2,500	DCA, RDC, General Fund
Prepare and adopt a land development ordinance, which assists in implementing the Echols County Future Land Use Plan	2006, 2007	County Commission, Echols County PAC	\$5,000	DCA, RDC, General Fund

Natural and Historic Resources				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to participate with the Echols County Historical Society	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	\$500/y	County

Seek grants and provide technical assistance to Echols County Historical Society with the development of the museum of local history	2005, 2006, 2007	County Commission	\$500/y	DNR, General Fund
Conduct a county historic resources inventory	2007, 2008	County Commission/Historical Society	\$5,000	DNR-HPD, General Fund

General Planning				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Annually re-evaluate the Echols County Short-Term Work Program	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	N/A	County
Participate in all updates to the 2025 Echols County Comprehensive Plan	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission, Echols County PAC	N/A	County
Prepare all grant/loan applications (CDBG,EDA,RD,etc.) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	\$100	County
Evaluate the advantages/disadvantages to increase the number of county commission board members from 3 to 5	2005, 2006	Co. Commission/Ga. General Assembly	\$2,000	County
Continue to use the Echols County Planning Advisory Commission to implement the Future Land Use Plan	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	\$2,500/y	County
Maintain annual mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	N/A	County
Continue the agreement to cost-share on code enforcement programs	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	N/A	Fee based
Investigate the formation of a sanitary sewer district and prepare preliminary engineering plans to service the Statenville area	2005, 2006	County Commission/Industrial Dev. Authority	\$2,500	General Fund
Establish a more accurate program to monitor timber harvested and sold in Echols County for Timber Tax purpose by Tax Commissioner/Assessor/Tax Office	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission	N/A	General Fund

III-7



**Legend**

**Land Use Category**

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Trans. / Comm. / Util.
- Parks / Rec. / Cons.
- Agricultural
- Forestry
- Undeveloped / Unused
- Rural Service Area
- Neighborhood Activity Centers



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005  
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005



**MAP III-1 ECHOLS COUNTY  
 FUTURE LAND USE**