

DeKalb County Officials Want to Build on Environmentally Sensitive Land

Here's what you need to know:

1. This proposal is located on an environmentally sensitive piece of property, with springs and streams, located in the FEMA floodplain, and will greatly impact Snapfinger Creek and the City of Pine Lake. The property already takes the water from 48+ acres of stormwater from Memorial Drive and has been serving that purpose quietly for over 20 years.
2. The DeKalb County Housing Development Corporation (DCHDC) has filed an application, on 6/28/21, for 178-232 apartments with some rental townhomes with the entrance on Memorial Drive. These will be low income housing.
3. This project will add nothing but roofs and parking to this already overburdened site. The upstream and downstream flooding impacts, which are already bad, will be much worse.
4. The DCHDC has a contingency contract to purchase the property, which is zone C-1, IF they can get the Land Use and Zoning changed.
5. This site was a major site for the Army Corp of Engineer (ACOE) Indian, Snapfinger, Intrenchment and Sugar Creeks (ISIS) which began in 2003 to address Ecosystem Degradation and Nuisance Flooding. Snapfinger Creek which runs from North Hairston then below I-20 into the South River.

Findings of Snapfinger Creek: Heavy Sediment Loads, Impacted Riparian Buffer, Degraded/Loss of Aquatic Habitat, Streambank Erosion, Trash/Litter, Extreme Variations in Hydrology.

6. This 20 acre site is in the upper Snapfinger watershed and was named as an important site in addressing the issues above. To make a difference in the entire Watershed you start in the upper portions then make your way down the stream. The more you can do above, the better the outcome. Due to some leadership changes in the DeKalb Watershed Department in 2009-2010, the support for the project was delayed and the program lost its Federal Funding. Another leadership change in 2012-2013, put the Local funding and support back in place, although even with the support of our local Congressman Hank Johnson who worked with the ACOE and President Obama, to restore the Federal Funding, he was not successful. The project was \$400,000.00 short of continuing and had completed Phase II. This was a loss of both Federal and Local monies that had been spent on the ISIS project. The study did find a State Endangered species of fish in Snapfinger Creek, the "Altamaha Shiner" which was found below I-20 and posed the question "what is preventing this fish from traveling upstream" but the study did not get that far.
7. The City of Pine Lake, through cooperation with the ACOE, was able to benefit from this study and advanced to construction of wetlands both above and below their lake. The point of exit from the proposed site tributary that runs through the site, at the point of confluence with Snapfinger Creek, is less than a 1/2 mile from the City of Pine Lake. If this were to move forward, the hard work of Pine Lake could be wiped out during one heavy rainfall.

This site should be purchased by the County to improve water quality and flooding, the purpose it already serves. Some undeveloped lands should remain that way and this is one of them. This is by far the most irresponsible proposal that I have ever seen.

There is a private Facebook group set up to inform the community of this proposal. Citizens can ask to join from: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fellsridgelake>

Several members of the Advisory Board sit on the Community Council which is scheduled to hear this proposal on August 17, 2021 although the community needs the Zoom meeting link for this meeting, the Planning Commission Meeting and the BOC meeting.

Location of Project in relation to Pine Lake:

