# CHAPTER 3 NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

## Section One: Natural Resources

### Introduction

In order to appropriately protect the county's natural and historic environments and develop sound workable alternatives for future land use in Morgan County and its municipalities, it is important to understand the existing conditions of the physical environment. Identification of existing natural and historic resources helps to determine land, historic sites and structures that should be protected as well as the facilities and programs that will be needed in the future. This chapter presents information on the county's natural systems (soils, slopes, hydrology, wetlands, tree cover, etc.), and historic manmade resources (architecture, towns, and archeological sites). In addition, the chapter includes those goals and policies that are needed in order for the county to realize the vision of protecting the natural and historic environment as well as the quality of life of residents.

### 3.1 Watersheds

Inventory

All of Morgan County lies within the greater Oconee River watershed. The county is also within the Upper Oconee Basin. The Oconee River only touches the far eastern edge of Morgan County in the form of Lake Oconee.

There are two principal watersheds within Morgan County (Map 3.1). The first, the Apalachee River watershed, includes the bulk of the eastern edge of the county. The second is the Hard Labor Creek watershed. Both of these watersheds are important water-supply watersheds for Morgan County. Other sub-watersheds are Sandy Creek (water supply watershed), Lake Oconee, Sugar Creek, Indian Creek, and Little River.

Assessment

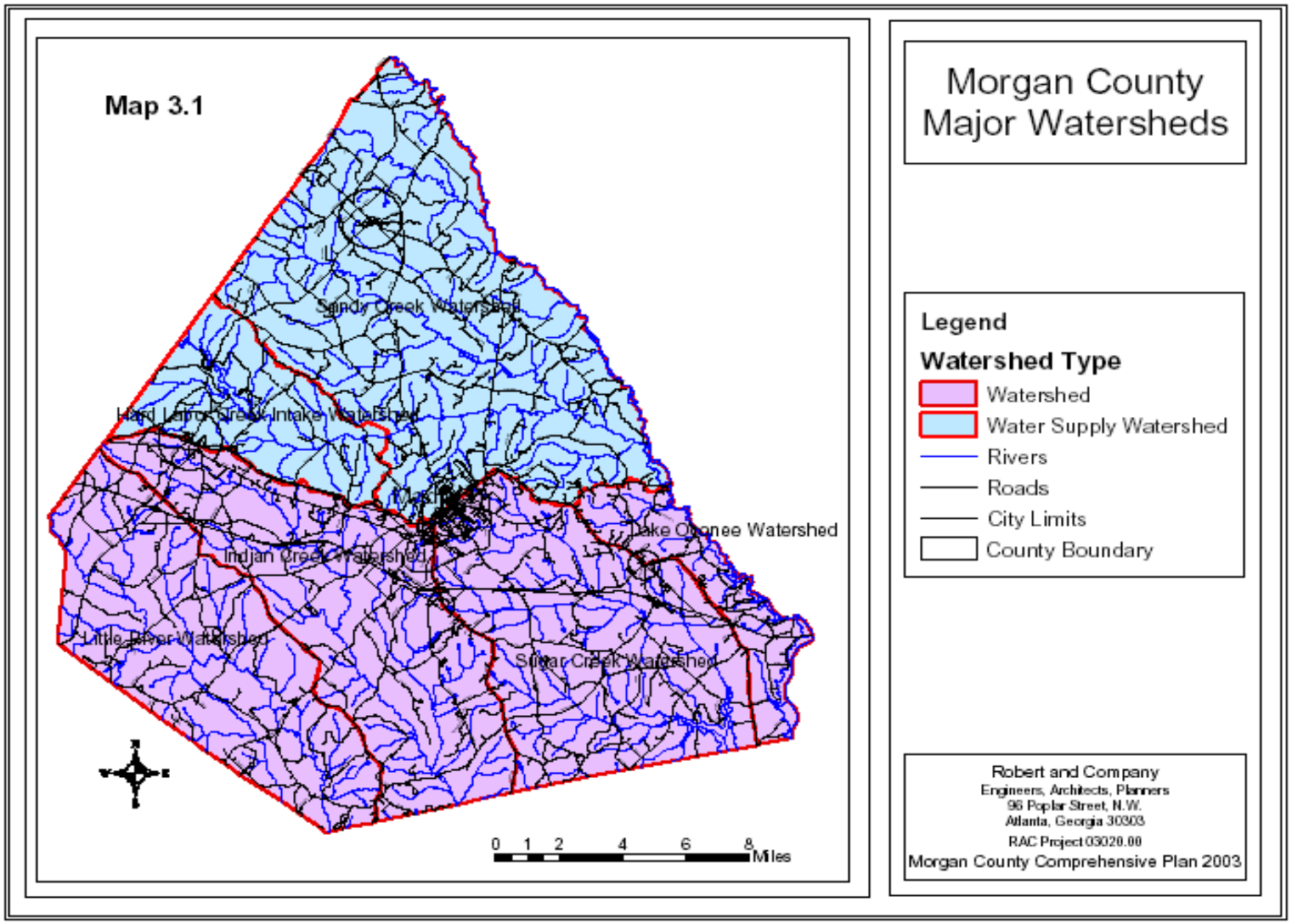
The development of Morgan County proceeded slowly from its incorporation in 1807 through the 1920's. From the 1920's to the 1970's the population of the county was in decline. Since 1980 the county has experienced increasing rates of growth. The current population of Morgan County is mostly concentrated in the center of the county near the ridgeline that runs from west to east along the historic railroad line connecting Rutledge, Madison, and Buckhead. There is also a clustering of population along the ridge from the Flat Rock community to Bostwick. Thus, in terms of impacts on watersheds, settlement patterns impact almost every possible water basin by being along the ridgelines which drain down hill into all the water features of the county.

In the last ten years, the majority of population growth has been on the periphery of the county three of its four sides. On most of the southern edge of the county there has been no appreciable growth, though the highest percentage of growth has been in the southeast corner of the county, below I-20 and near Lake Oconee. In absolute terms, the majority of the growth has been along

the Lake Oconee edge of the county and the western edge closest to Atlanta on I-20. The northeastern edge of the county by the Apalachee River and the far southern edge of the county have also experienced significant growth. The historic core of the county around Madison and Rutledge saw only modest growth, with declines in some of Madison's older neighborhoods. Thus, growth in the last ten years had the potential to impact almost every possible water basin by being widely dispersed throughout the county.

Growth and development within Morgan County's water supply watershed areas pose a potential threat to water quality. In light of the past, recent and projected population growth in Morgan County and municipalities, it is of vital importance that measures be taken to protect water quality from the damaging effects of erosion, sedimentation and pollution. Morgan County and all municipalities must work to enact and enforce regulations to protect and preserve watersheds and water quality.

**Map 3.1 Morgan County Major Watersheds**



## 3.2 Groundwater Recharge

Inventory

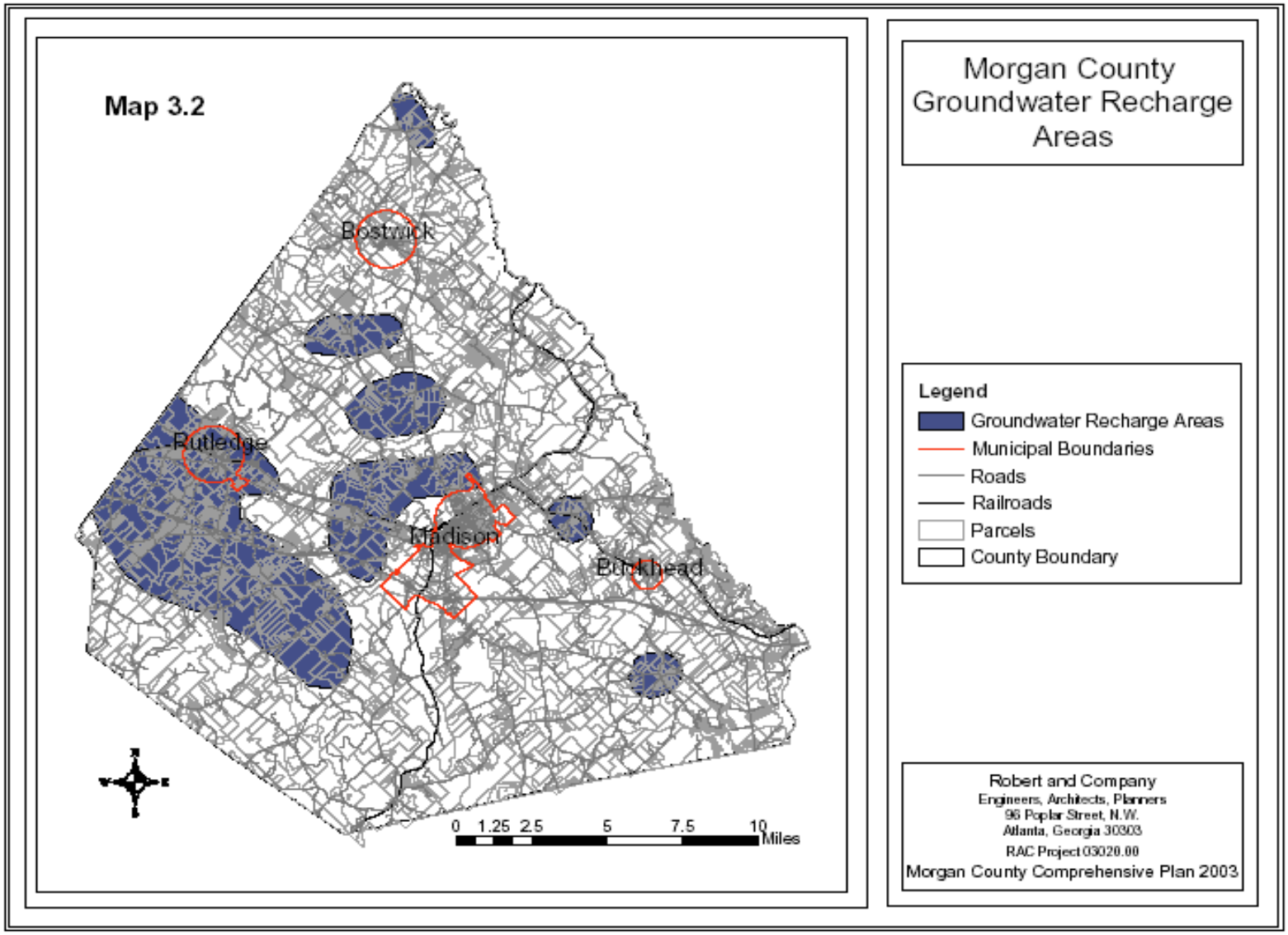
Groundwater recharge areas, as defined by state law, are any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. Probable "significant recharge areas" have been mapped by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Mapping of recharge areas is based on outcrop area, lithology, soils type and thickness, slope, density of lithologic contacts, geologic structure, the presence of karst, and potentiometric surfaces. Standards have been promulgated for their protection, based on their level of pollution susceptibility. Significant recharge areas are generally those with thick soils and slopes of less than 8%. The areas have not been mapped at a scale that corresponds to county maps and are therefore difficult to locate with precision.

Recharge areas in Morgan County are located primarily in the unincorporated areas of the county west of Madison (Map 3.2). Rutledge is entirely within a recharge area. Recharge land within the unincorporated area is largely agricultural, including crop and forest land. The recharge area near Madison is largely undeveloped. The recharge area within Rutledge is partially developed. The expectation is that development pressures will continue to increase on recharge areas in the Rutledge and Madison area.

Assessment

It is important that these recharge areas be protected because many residents and businesses of Morgan County depend on wells for drinking water, livestock production and irrigation. If polluting substances seep into the ground in a recharge area, these pollutants may be carried into the aquifer and contaminate the groundwater, making it unsafe to drink. Thus the purpose of recharge protection standards and ordinances is to prevent the contamination of groundwater. Such standards may include limits on waste disposal permits, impervious surface paving areas, storage tanks for toxic liquids, and standards for buildings and overall development. Groundwater recharge guidelines are established by the Department of Natural Resources, and Morgan County and municipalities must work to meet or exceed these standards to protect groundwater quality.

**Map 3.2 Morgan County Groundwater Recharge Areas**



## 3.3 Wetlands

Inventory

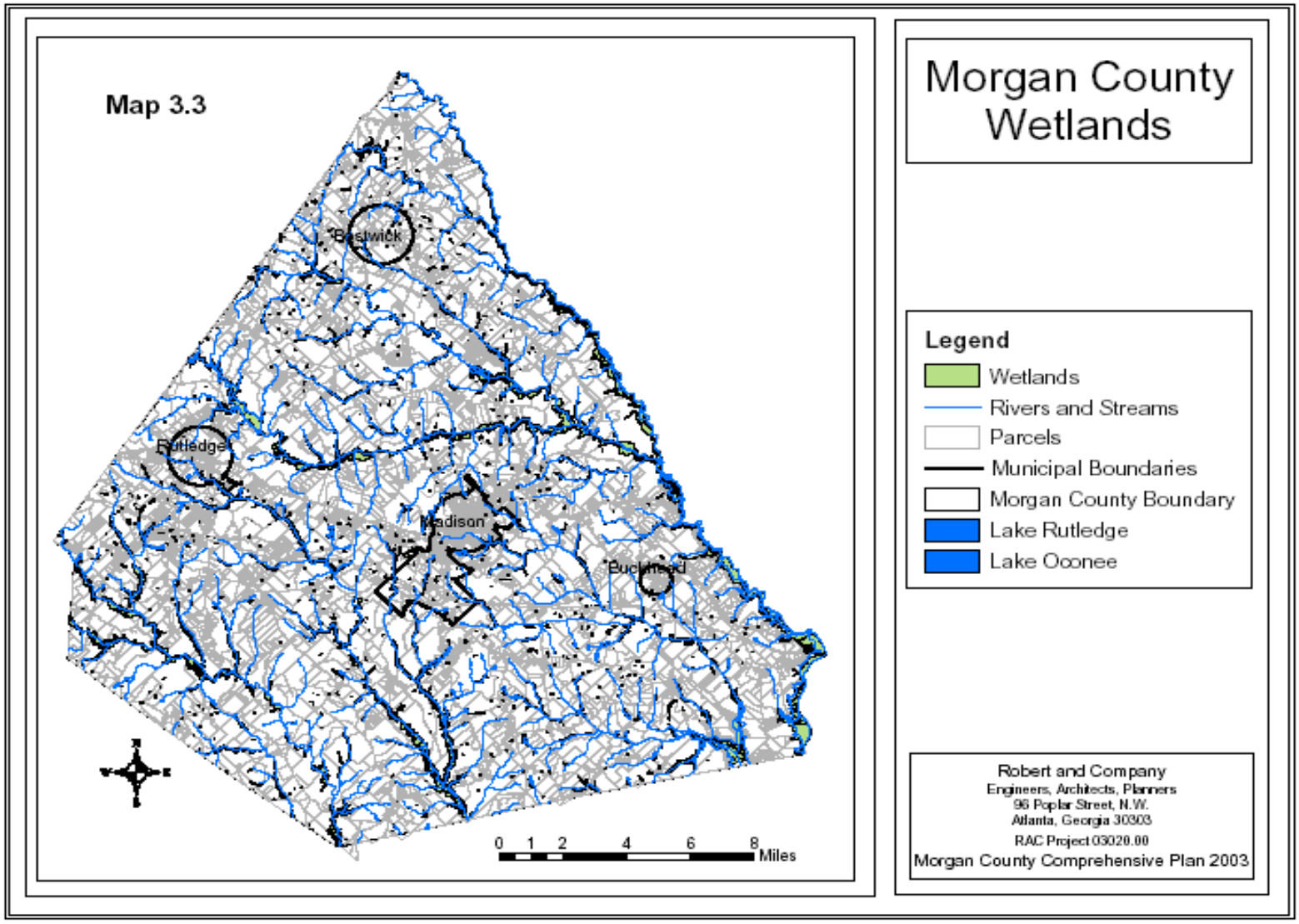
Freshwater wetlands are defined as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, under normal circumstances, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. The ecological parameters for designating wetlands include hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydrological conditions that involve a temporary or permanent source of water to cause soil saturation.

The wetlands in Morgan County have been mapped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service using aerial photography. As one might expect, the majority of wetlands are located in the bottomlands of the county along all major creeks and rivers. Many of these linear riverbank wetlands stretch for miles and are extensive, interconnected and relatively contiguous. The major wetlands are along Little Creek, Big Indian Creek, Little River, Shoal Creek, Holgers Creek, Pole Ridge Creek, Hunnicut Creek, Rawlings Branch, Rice Creek, Hard Labor Creek, Big Sandy Creek, and the Apalachee River (Map 3.3).

Assessment

Wetlands are important for several reasons. They provide a major habitat for all kinds of wildlife and provide a major natural filtration system which protects the water quality of an area. Their existence is also desirable for the quantity of water storage they provide in times of flood and backup reserves in times of drought. Thus wetlands protect and provide for the human community surrounding them. For these and other reasons, every effort should be made to preserve Morgan County's contiguous system of wetlands to enable these areas to perform their positive functions even more efficiently, effectively, and also to a much greater degree. Wetlands protection ordinances and enforcement of wetlands protection through the development review process must be given a high priority in local policy.

**Map 3.3 Morgan County Wetlands**



## 3.4 River Corridors

Inventory

Morgan County is contained within the Oconee River Basin along its upper reaches (Map 3.4). The Apalachee River is the eastern boundary of Morgan County for approximately 34 miles. Lake Oconee is the result of an impoundment on the Oconee River and backs up water along the far southeastern edge of the county.

*Apalachee River*

The headwaters of the Apalachee River are in Gwinnett County. The river then forms the border between several counties until it joins the Oconee River at Lake Oconee. The river flows primarily through forest and agricultural lands, and there are no incorporated towns in the Apalachee River floodplain, which varies in width from 200-400 feet. The Apalachee River is part of the Regionally Important Resources (RIR) nomination submitted by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 1992, with the Apalachee qualifying as a stream of 3rd order or greater. Development is typically restricted close to 3rd order streams with a minimum protective buffer of 200 feet or the 100-year floodplain, whichever is greater. Successful RIR nominations lead to resource management strategies that include policies to manage, conserve, and protect the site.

*Oconee River/Lake Oconee*

The Oconee River Basin was established as an RIR in 1993. Its headwaters are in Hall County and its form in Morgan County is a shallow lake made by the creation of the Wallace Dam in 1979. Lake Oconee was created by the Georgia Power Company and covers 19,050 acres with 374 miles of shoreline. Fifty-five miles of shoreline are in Morgan County. Due to its relatively constant level, Lake Oconee is becoming known for fishing and for the subdivisions and resort communities that are appearing on its shores. The Georgia Power Company maintains a 25-foot vegetative buffer around the lake, which is larger in some areas for aesthetic screening. No boathouses are allowed and Georgia Power must permit all marina developments. Morgan County does not have direct jurisdiction over Lake Oconee or its buffers.

*Little River*

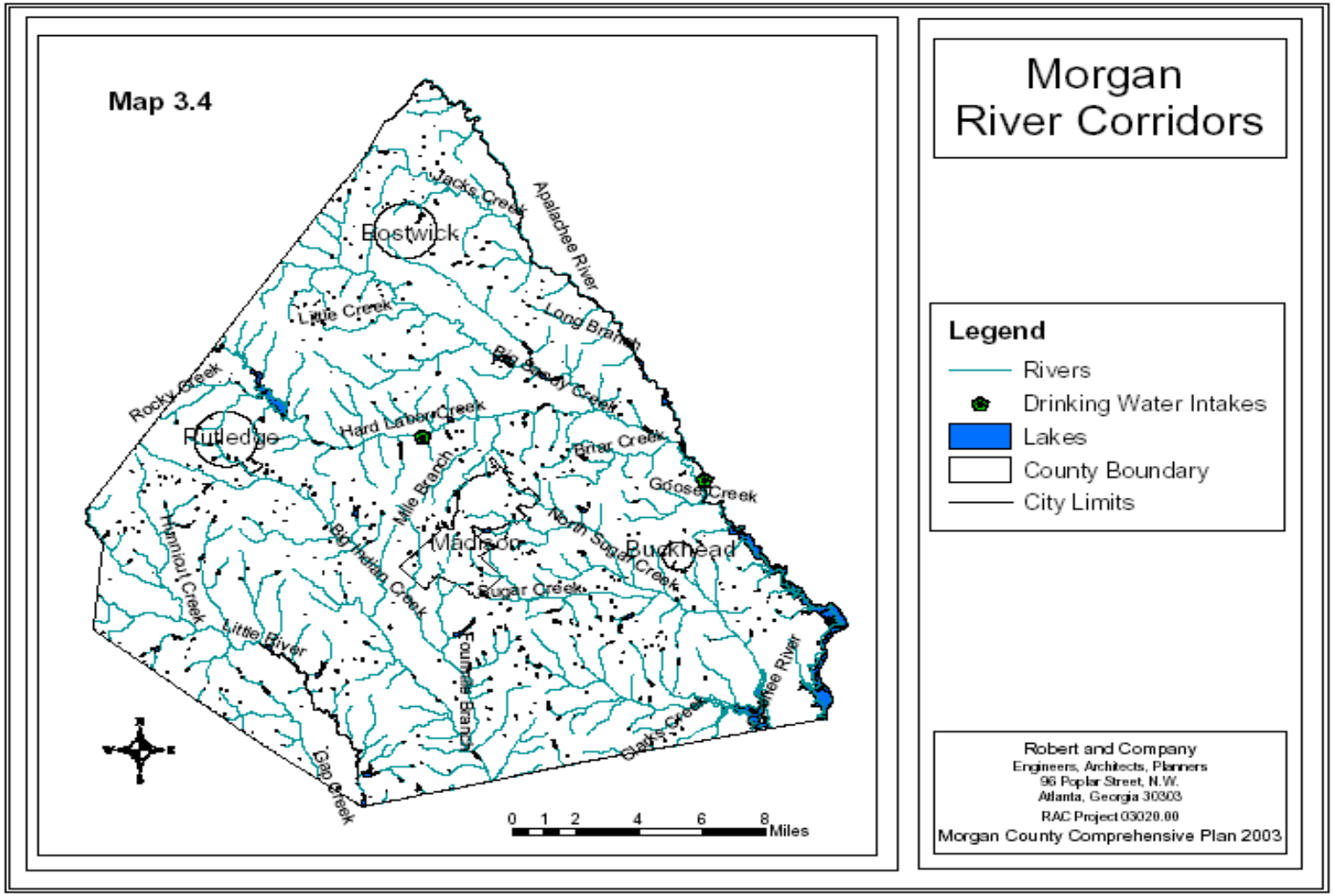
The Little River is located near the Pennintgon Community in southern Morgan County. The river crosses Georgia Highway 83 about 6 miles south of I-20 and is the water supply for Eatonton, Georgia.

Assessment

A significant amount of development has already occurred in the areas adjacent to Morgan County's major river corridors, and there is a high likelihood of more such development in the future. While Lake Oconee is managed and protected to a significant degree, the Apalachee River corridor may not be sufficiently protected. Morgan County should make efforts to exceed state standards for protection of the Apalachee River

corridor, as water from the Apalachee above Lake Oconee is a prime source of drinking water for residents in Morgan County, Madison, Rutledge, Bostwick and Buckhead.

**Map 3.4 Morgan County River Corridors**



## 3.5 Floodplains

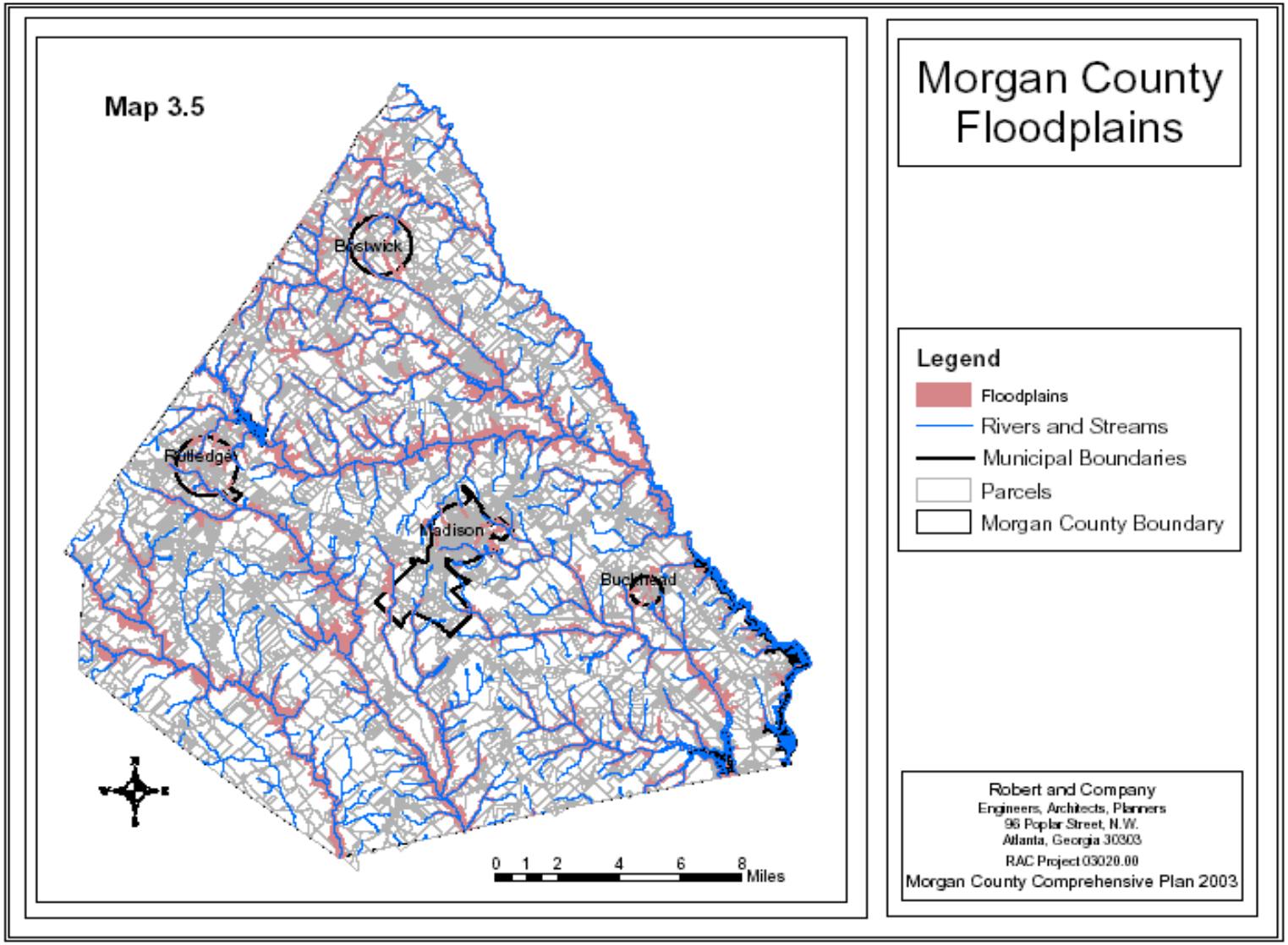
Inventory

Flood hazard boundary maps have been prepared for Morgan County and the municipal jurisdictions within the county. Floodplain information for the unincorporated county is not yet available in digital format by FEMA. However, the 2002 FEMA floodplain maps for Morgan County have been digitized by Robert and Company for use with the GIS system (Map 3.5). The 100-year flood hazard maps indicate those areas that have a one percent annual chance of a flood event that will equal or exceed a selected magnitude having significance vis-à-vis floodplain management and insurance rates. Bostwick, Buckhead, Madison and Rutledge have participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since 1975, and the county was recently re-surveyed in February of 2002. To date there have been only scattered reports of flood damage along Hard Labor Creek. Due to the fact that the municipalities are all located along ridgelines, there has been no significant flooding damage to municipalities in recent history.

Assessment

As more land cover is disturbed and as development occurs in lower lands along creeks, the potential for flood damage in Morgan County will increase. Floodplain areas in Morgan County should be protected from development for this reason. Alternate forms of land use such as agriculture, forestry, recreation and greenspace preservation are appropriate for floodplain areas.

**Map 3.5 Morgan County Floodplains**



### 3.6 Soil Types

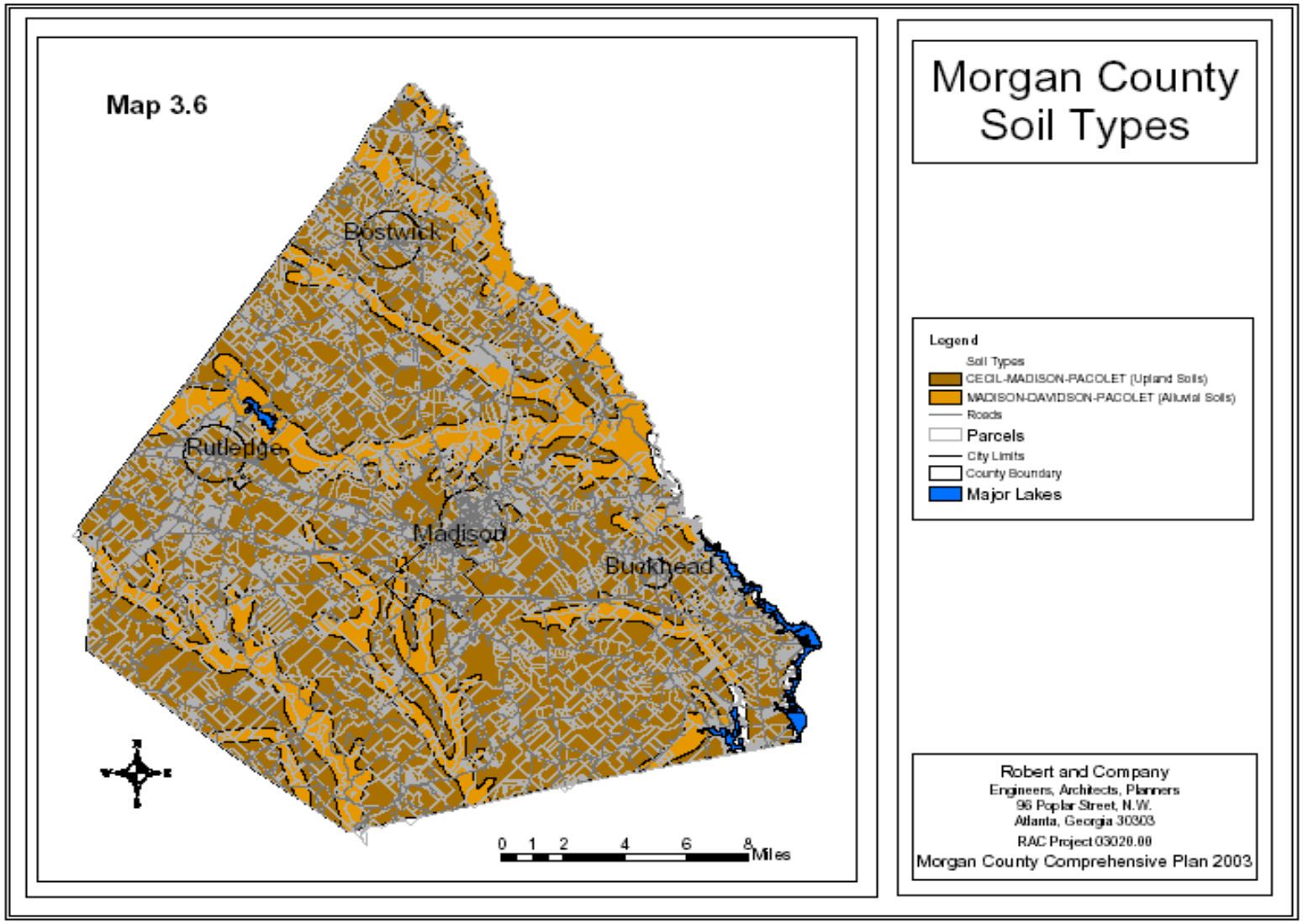
Inventory

An analysis of county soils reveals information useful in long range planning for land development (Map 3.6). Soils can be categorized by their suitability for development and their suitability for farming. The farmland soils will be examined in the Prime Agriculture Soils section. The most important criteria for planning purposes includes an evaluation of soil suitability for septic tanks and recharge potential as well as identification of soils susceptible to severe erosion. This latter category is often a function of the topographical slope of the site and will be examined in the next section.

Assessment

Morgan County does not own or operate a countywide wastewater treatment system. Thus, the majority of new development in the county is reliant on wastewater disposal using septic tanks, with a few exceptions. Septic tanks can provide a low cost, environmentally safe solution to wastewater treatment. However, if septic tank-leachfield systems are not properly designed or are installed in unsuitable soils, they can pose serious environmental and health-related concerns. A majority of the county's soils, 66.4%, are suitable for septic tank drain fields. In Morgan County the majority of unsuitable soils are located along the low areas adjacent to rivers, creeks, and streams. These areas are typically found within the 100-year floodplain of major water courses and in alluvial land along smaller streams. Land that is unsuitable for septic tanks is also generally unsuitable for building foundations.

**Map 3.6 Morgan County Soil Types**



### 3.7 Steep Slopes

Inventory

Sloping, non-rocky terrain of more than 25% is considered to have a high risk for severe soils erosion. Morgan County is in the middle part of the Piedmont Province in the gently rolling landscape of the Central Georgia region. The northern and western part of the county is higher and more sloping than the southern and eastern parts (Map 3.7). The highest elevation in the county is 820 feet and the lowest point on Lake Oconee is 426 feet. Although the variation in topography is over 400 feet, the change is so gradual that there are almost no steep slopes over 25% in the entire county. This means that there are relatively few areas which are too costly to grade or too fragile to develop when the potential for erosion is considered.

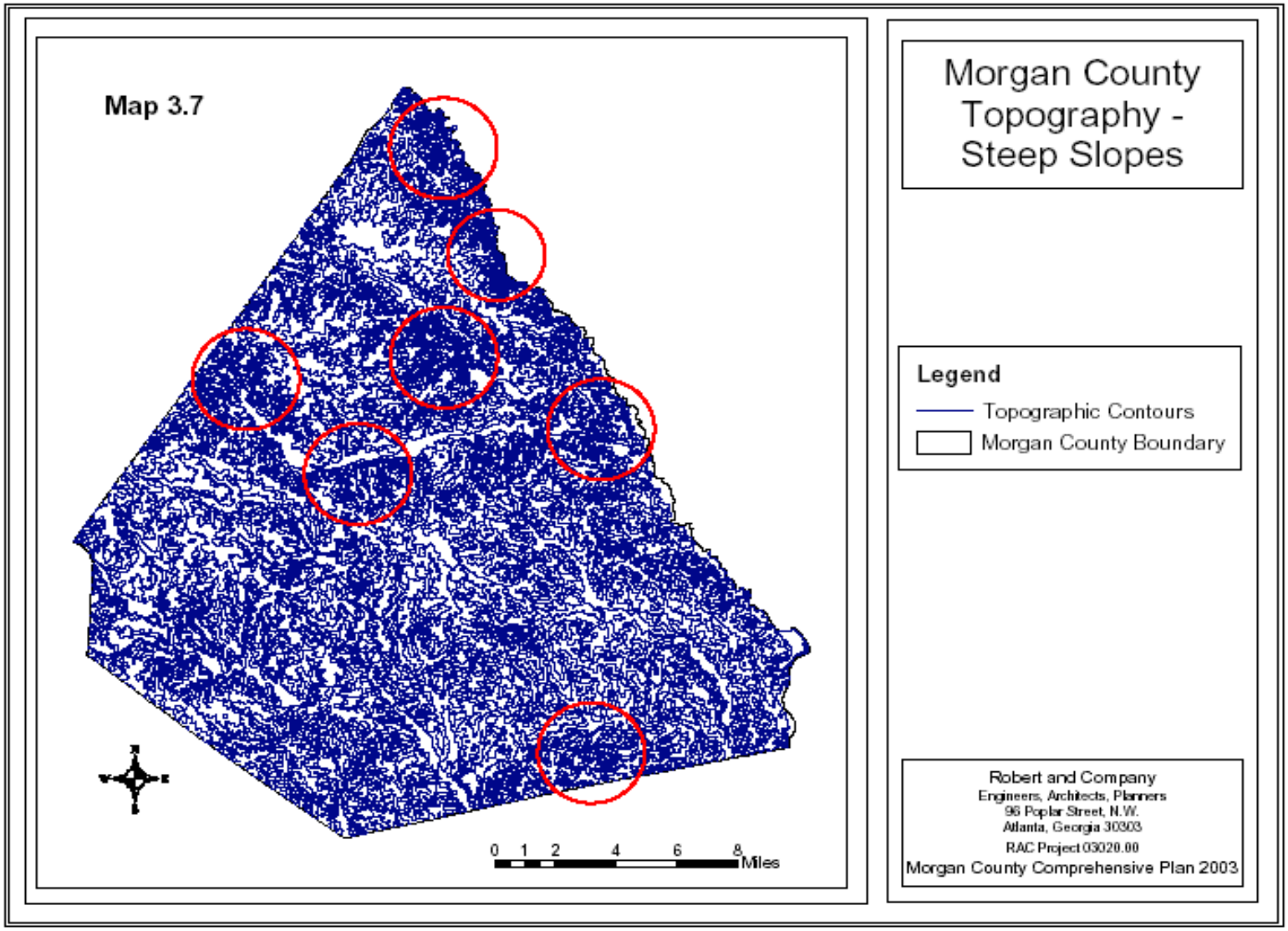
The few areas of potential steep slopes have been generally identified from contour lines on the topographical map of the county to determine where contours bunch together in their closest formations indicating steeper slopes. In looking at the map of potential steep slopes, one can see that they tend to cluster along water features: along the Apalachee River to the north and east, along Sandy Creek and Hard Labor Creek in the center of the county, and along Fourmile Branch to the south.

Assessment

Steep slopes and water features, combined with periodically heavy rainfall, lead to the potential for erosion susceptibility. Erosion susceptibility is of concern in land use planning because of negative impacts of sediment buildup in rivers and lakes, the loss of topsoil and the potential transfer of nonpoint source pollutants. Erosion occurs naturally but can be greatly accelerated by human activity. Other factors can affect erosion rates such as climate and tree cover. By reviewing a tree cover map for Morgan County, one can see that the county has maintained a large percentage of tree cover which, along with other vegetative cover, acts as a break on erosion. The preservation of forested areas in Morgan County is important to preventing erosion, as is the use of best management development practices that include, for example, selective rather than clear cutting for new subdivision development.

Soils susceptible to severe erosion are commonly found in close proximity to the steeply sloping areas of the county but are also widely dispersed. The watersheds in the northern half of the county seem to be at highest risk for erosion damage. These northern watersheds also form the water supply watersheds for the county. Particular attention should be paid to preventing erosion in the northern half of Morgan County.

**Map 3.7 Morgan County Topography – Steep Slopes**



### 3.8 Prime Agricultural Soils

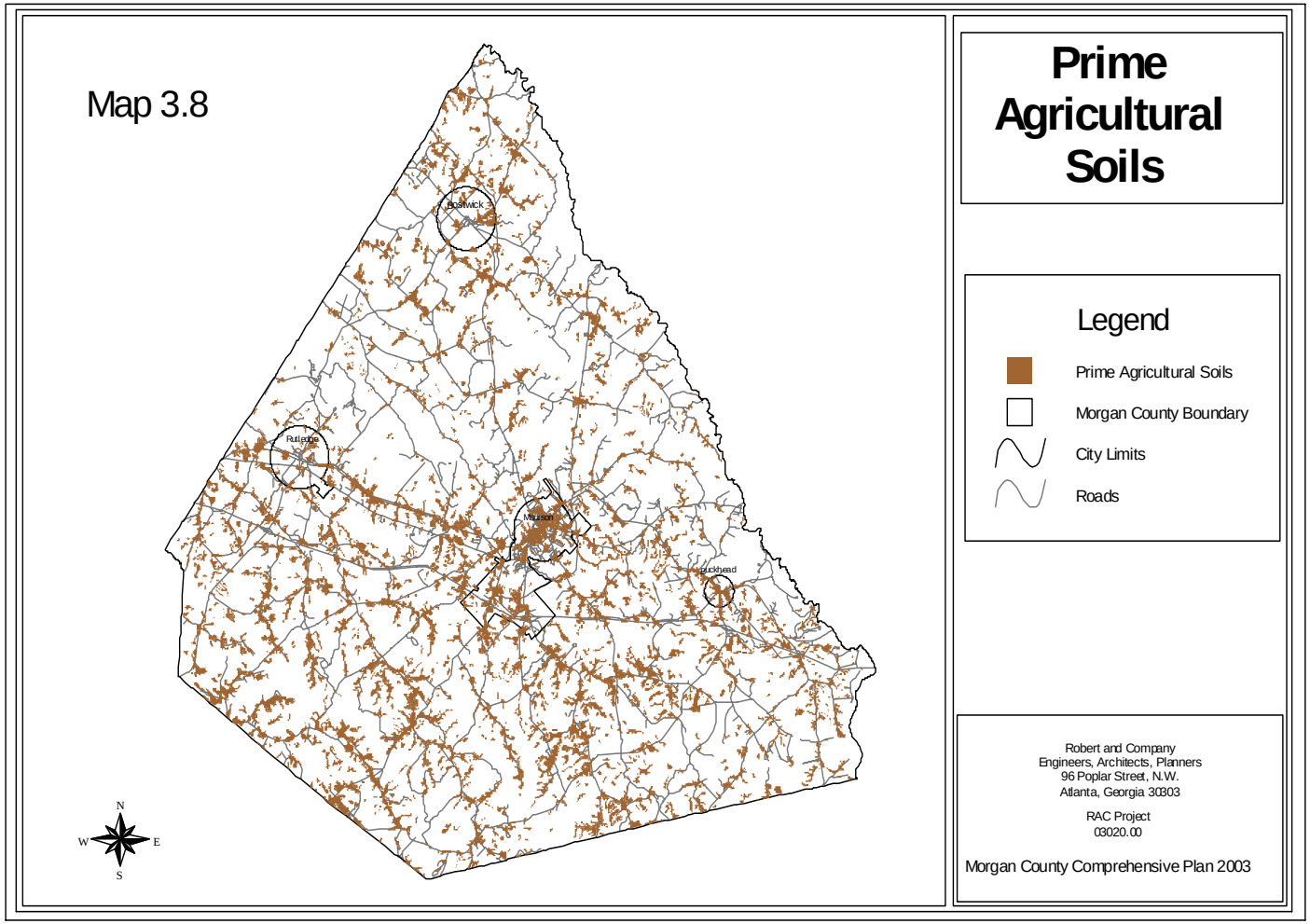
Inventory

In Georgia, prime farmland soils are those soils best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. These soils have the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained good yields of crops. According to the Soil Conservation Service, 22.4% of Morgan County's soils are prime farmland soils (Map 3.8). In terms of the municipalities, 75% of Bostwick soils and 25% of Buckhead soils are prime farmland soils. In Madison and Rutledge most of the land with prime agriculture soil has been developed, though a significant amount of land in each municipality is still in agricultural production.

Assessment

Prime agricultural soils are a valuable resource that is easily destroyed in a developing environment. While it is impractical for all of these soils to be preserved, efforts should be made to do so where possible. In terms of protection, the prime soils in the unincorporated areas of Morgan County should be a major focus of any conservation efforts in this plan or other county documents and programs.

**Map 3.8 Prime Agricultural Soils**



## 3.9 Plant & Animal Habitats

Inventory

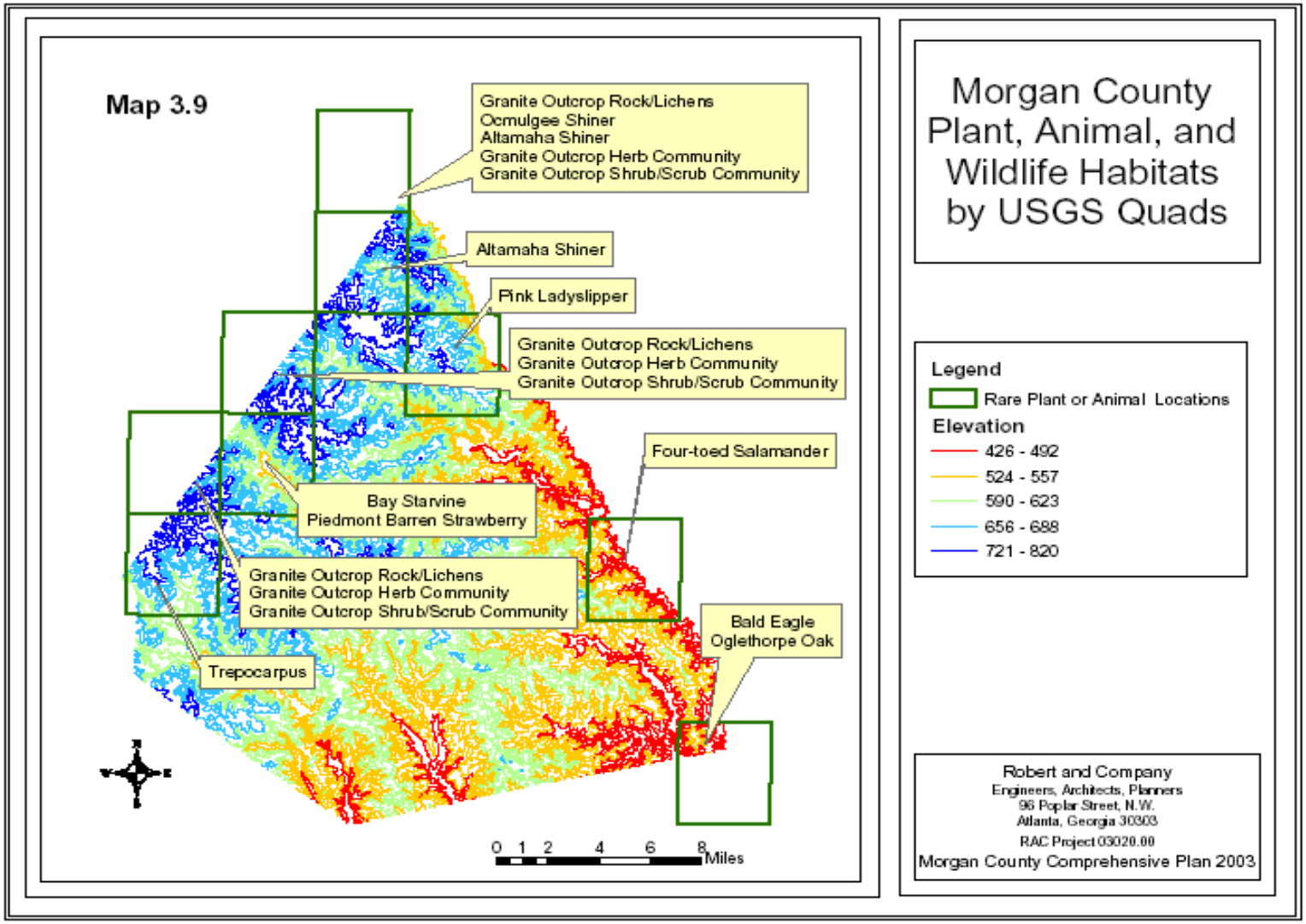
Land use in Morgan County and the resulting demands placed on natural resources such as soils, trees, wetlands, and water is such that a variety of species can find adequate habitats within the county. Familiar species such as deer, swamp rabbit, squirrel, beaver, raccoon, otter, muskrats, songbirds, raptors, woodpeckers, and waterfowl are seen on a regular basis in Morgan County. Trees and vegetation common to the Piedmont Province of Georgia and the Southeastern United States are also common in the county due to its extensive and largely intact vegetative cover.

The Department of Natural Resources, Freshwater Wetlands and Natural Heritage Inventory (FWNHI) section, has compiled a list of rare element (Plant and Animal) occurrences for Morgan County. A rare element occurrence is a "species of concern…considered sufficiently rare or the status unknown so as to warrant the collection of occurrence information." The information is available on a county-wide basis only. In looking at the map of rare plant animal and wildlife habitats of Morgan County one can see that the majority of occurrences are in the upland topographic sections on the western and northern edges of the county. There are two areas identified as habitats on the eastern edge of the county (Map 3.9). One is on Lake Oconee and the other is on the Apalachee River. The identified plant elements include lichens, herbs and shrubs common to granite outcroppings, the Bay Starvine, the pink Ladyslipper, the Piedmont Barren Strawberry, the Trepocarpus, and the Oglethorpe Oak. The animal elements include the Ocmulgee Shiner, the Altamaha Shiner, the Four-toed Salamander, and the Bald Eagle. The general locations of habitat for these various relatively rare species are shown on Map 3.9.

Assessment

Protection of sensitive plant and animal habitats is generally commensurate with the protection of sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, though uplands and other environments not considered "sensitive" also provide important habitat. It is important to place emphasis on protection of all species of plants and animals as the local ecosystem is highly interdependent. Environmentally conscious land use planning and other measures should be employed in Morgan County to protect sensitive plant and animal habitats.

**Map 3.9 Morgan County Plant, Animal and Wildlife Habitats by USGS Quads**



## 3.10 Major Recreational Areas

Inventory

Major federal, state, and regional parks and recreation areas are identified because of their significant contribution to the quality of life of the community. They not only provide for recreation but also for the preservation of the natural resources identified in the earlier sections of this chapter. As of 2003 there are three major recreational sites in Morgan County (Map 3.10).

*Hard Labor Creek State Park*

Hard Labor Creek State Park is one of the largest and most popular state parks in Georgia. It came into being during the Great Depression when the National Park Service acquired 44 individual parcels of land that were joined to form a 5,805 acre Hard Labor Creek Recreation Demonstration Area. The purpose of the site was to demonstrate the reclamation of marginal farmland for recreation. The facilities on site were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration and currently include an 18-hole golf course, camping areas, rental cottages, stables, hiking trails, and a lake with a swimming area. The Georgia State University observatory is also located in the park.

*B.F. Grant and Redlands Wildlife Management Areas*

The B.F. Grant Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in the very far southern edge of Morgan County, immediately south and east of the Godfrey community. A second WMA, Redlands, is located in the portion of the Oconee National Forest that is in eastern Morgan County, southeast of Buckhead. Both WMAs are managed by the Fish and Game Division of the Department of Natural Resources and are open to the public for camping, hiking, and hunting.

*Lake Oconee*

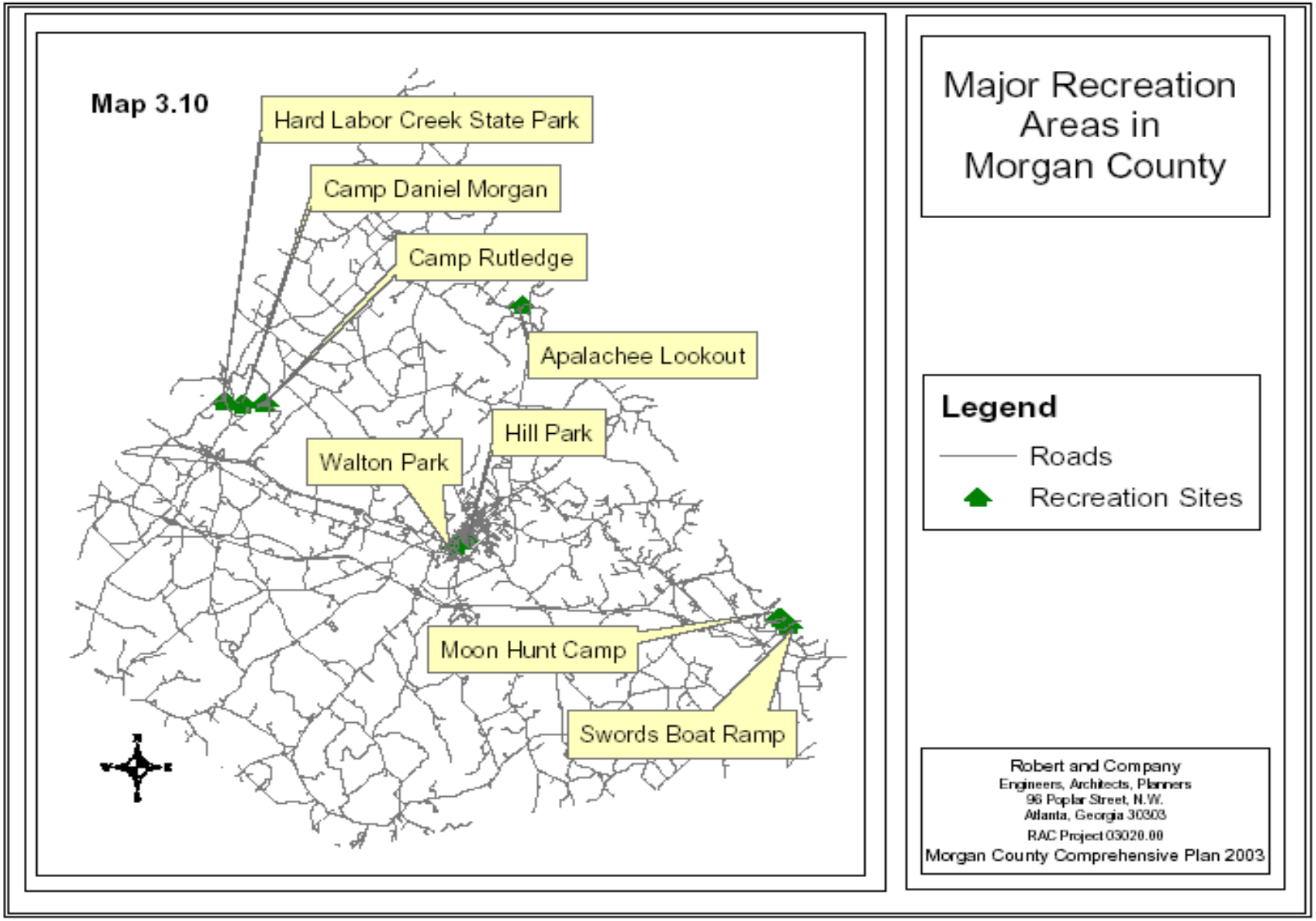
Lake Oconee is a major recreational resource for Morgan County. Public facilities at Swords Crossing includes a community boat ramp, and there are numerous parks and public facilities scattered along the edge of the Lake in adjacent counties.

Other parks and recreation facilities are present in Morgan County and the municipalities which serve the needs of residents. These smaller facilities, primarily for active recreation use, are considered in greater detail in Section 4.7 of the Community Facilities and Services element.

Assessment

Parks and recreation areas in Morgan County significantly contribute to the quality of life for residents. Local government efforts should be made to continue to preserve and enhance these areas as well as to better promote them as a quality of life factor to enhance the potential for attraction of quality economic development.

**Map 3.10 Major Recreation Areas in Morgan County**



### 3.11 Scenic Views and Sites

Inventory

Scenic views and sites have been identified during the process of developing the Morgan County Comprehensive Plan by the Comprehensive Planning Task Force. In addition, a public workshop was conducted as part of developing the Morgan County GreenPrint conservation plan. The GreenPrint workshop sought to identify important natural resources such as scenic views for conservation purposes. Numerous potential scenic corridors were identified and are listed below, also see Map 3.11.

*Potential Scenic Corridors*

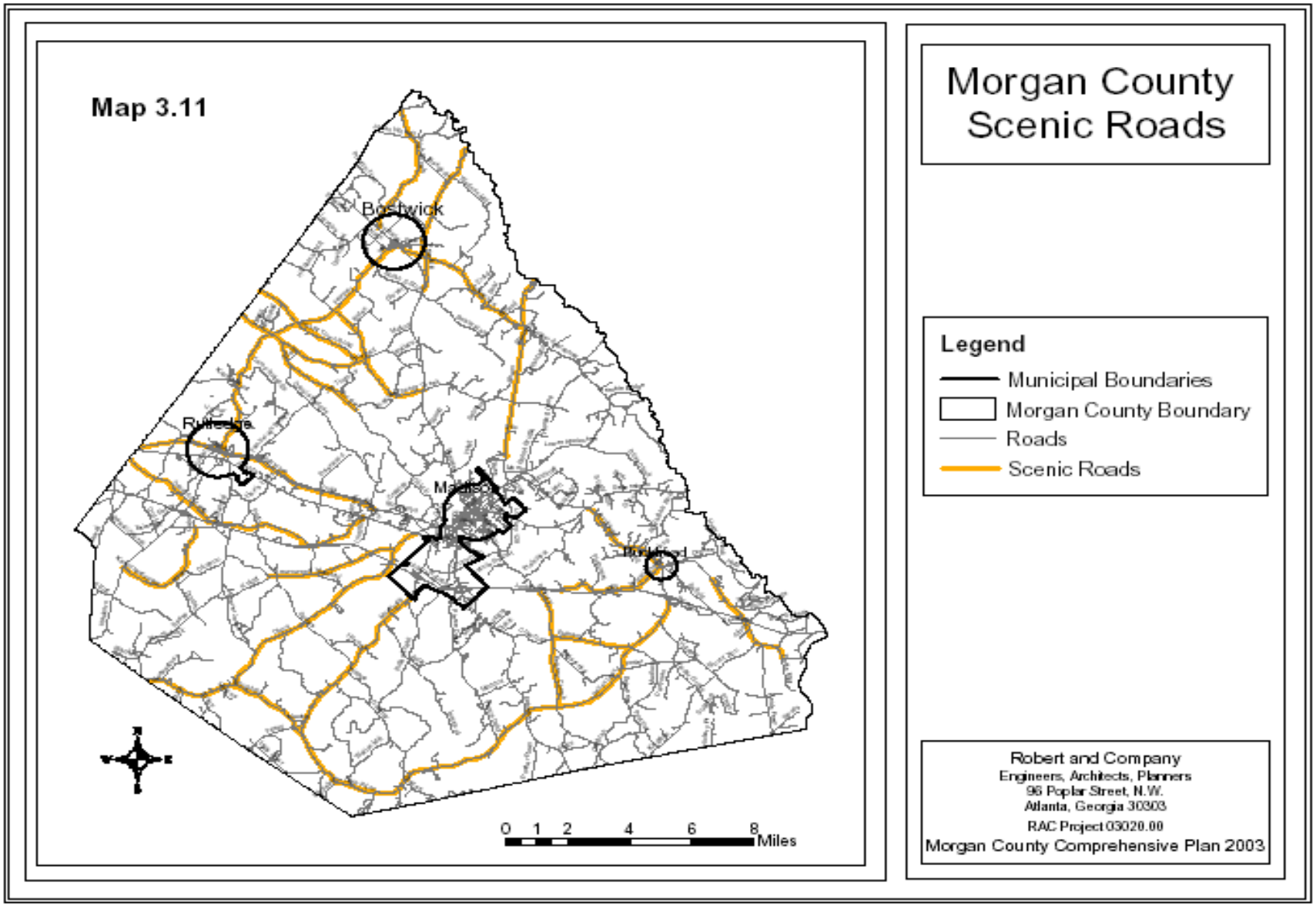
- US 441 corridor
- GA 83 corridor
- US 278
- Apalachee Road between Bostwick and Apalachee
- Aqua Road/Mission Road
- Baldwin Dairy Road
- Bethany Church Road south of Plainview Road to its intersection with Seven Islands Road
- Bethany Rd to its intersection with Seven Island Rd
- Broughton Road
- Brownwood/Knight Roads
- Buckhead Road, south of intersection with US 278 to downtown Buckhead
- Centennial Road
- Clack Road
- Davis Academy Road between the county line and Old Mill Road
- Dixie Highway
- Doster Road to Thomas Road
- Fairplay Road between Sandy Creek Road and Prospect Road
- Hardeman Mill Road
- Hester Town Road
- High Shoals Road between County Line and Bostwick Road
- Keecheefoonee Road
- Little River Road to its intersection with GA 83
- Nathan Store Road
- Newborn Road
- Old Mill Road
- Parks Mills Road east of Buckhead until his intersection with Zion Rd
- Paxson Dairy Road
- Prospect Road to its intersection with Sandy Creek Road
- Seven Island Road

Assessment

Due to the level of access afforded by road corridors, these areas are the most susceptible to unattractive or undesirable development. While industry and commerce is largely

dependent on corridors for the shipping and receiving of goods, it is important to also consider the aesthetics of corridors, scenic views, and their contribution to quality of life. Corridor regulations mandating a high level of design sensitivity are already in place in the City of Madison. Morgan County and the municipalities of Bostwick, Buckhead and Rutledge should consider formal recognition of scenic corridors and establishment of an appropriate level of corridor regulations in order to protect the scenic quality of corridors and the views that they offer to residents and visitors.

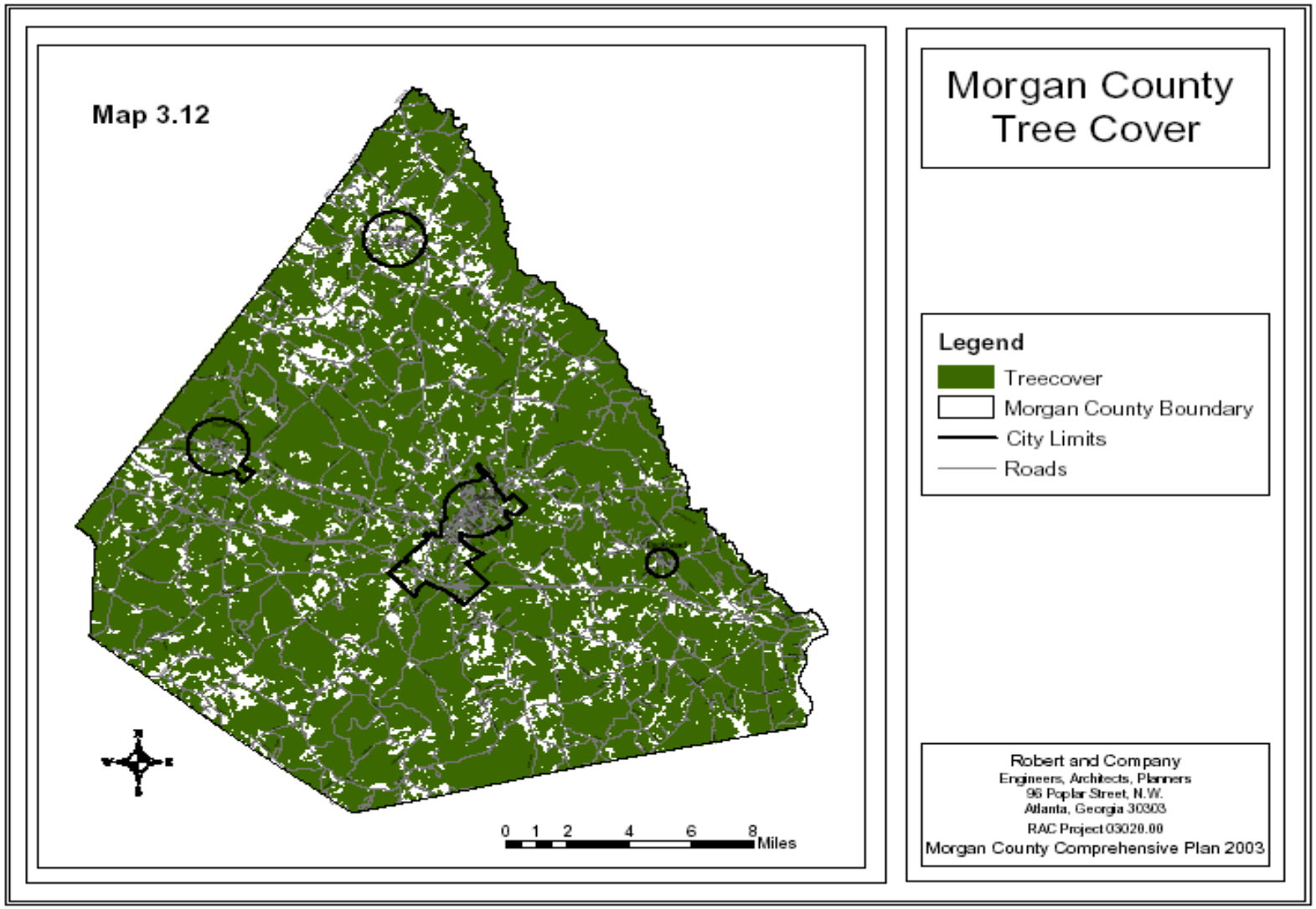
**Map 3.11 Morgan County Scenic Roads**



### 3.12 Tree Cover

Due to its rural character and the presence of a number of commercial tree farms Morgan County has a significant level of tree cover, see Map 3.12. In addition to providing a vital economic resource for the county, tree cover enhances the environment and quality of life for county residents and visitors. Throughout the public input processes for the Morgan County Comprehensive and GreenPrint Plans the need for increased preservation and protection of the county's tree cover was noted as a priority.

**Map 3.12 Morgan County Tree Cover**



## 3.13 Natural Resources Goals and Policies

Greenspace and Open Space Goals and Policies

Goal 1.0 Permanently preserve open space and green space throughout Morgan County in order to maintain a sense of rural character, provide passive recreational opportunities, preserve environmental quality, and encourage farming, livestock raising, dairying, forestry, and other agricultural activities that are environmentally compatible.

Objective 1.0 Meet or exceed State of Georgia Greenspace goals by permanently protecting more than 20% of the county's land area in farmland, forests, natural areas or parks. As fiscally feasible, greenspaces should be publicly owned or have public access.

Policy 1.1 Utilize the completed Greenprint Plan as a guide for a county-wide environmental protection program, in the development of the county's land use plan, and as a factor in environmental impact analysis.

Policy 1.2 Incentivize the use of innovative tools such as Conservation Subdivisions, Conservation Easements, Purchasable Development Rights and Transferable Development Rights (TDRs), to the extent possible under State law.

Policy 1.3 Explore the potential for establishing wetlands or other land conservation banks for sending developments in other counties.

Policy 1.4 Limit the extension of water and sewer lines to only those areas that are incorporated cities or have been designated for increased development in the land use plan. Discourage negative effects on corridors that can result from the extension of water and sewer infrastructure, e.g. strip commercial development and residential sprawl.

Policy 1.5 Require all new development to contribute to the permanent protection of greenspace in an appropriate manner.

Policy 1.6 Establish conservation subdivisions as the required development model for Morgan County. Modify regulations to ensure that density bonuses are only received if land that would not otherwise have been protected is now preserved, and ensure that set aside conservation land is permanently protected.

Policy 1.7 Ensure that suitable public and/or private entities exist that can receive, manage, and/or monitor development rights and easement programs in the county.

Policy 1.8 Implement a zero wetlands loss policy except for essential public projects with no alternative site and for grandfathered building lots. When wetlands must be disturbed, they should be replaced within the Morgan County area at an appropriate ratio and in an environmentally appropriate manner.

Policy 1.9 Develop a system of passive recreation parks throughout the county and within each city that may be part of or separate from active recreational facilities. The system should provide opportunities for hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, and may include nature preserves including bird sanctuaries.

Policy 1.9.1 Strive for no city resident to be further than a 5 minute walk and no county resident further than a 5 minute drive of a park or trail of some type.

1.9.2 Encourage the development of joint park facilities with adjacent counties where significant natural resources may be present. Possible locations include the Apalachee River, county gateways, and scenic areas.

1.9.3 Study the potential for redevelopment of the old county landfill site for open space or recreational purposes.

1.9.4 Study the potential for a joint Madison-Morgan County regional park, possibly in conjunction with the landfill site or the current or future bypasses around Madison

1.9.5 Explore the adoption of volunteer community garden programs in cities and neighborhoods throughout the county.

Objective 2.0 Protect important visual corridors and gateways of and to the county and its cities.

Policy 2.1 Identify and appropriately designate important corridors and gateways. (I-20 should be considered a corridor and its exits as gateways.)

Policy 2.2 Use water or sewer line extensions as an opportunity to preserve viewscapes whenever possible.

Policy 2.3 Provide incentives to encourage landowners to permanently designate land as a viewscape.

Policy 2.4 Acquire fee simple title or development rights to key gateways into the county and its cities.

Policy 2.5 Develop and adopt appropriate corridor/gateway regulations and guidelines for setbacks, landscaping, tree removal, curb cuts, etc.

Policy 2.6 Utilize innovative tools (See policy 1.2 above) to help protect designated viewscapes.

Policy 2.7 Review and improve as necessary the local requirements for setbacks and vegetative buffers for timber harvesting and new land intensive agriculture, e.g., poultry houses, feedlots, greenhouses, dairy facilities.

Policy 2.8 Ensure that widened roads remain along their existing routes to the degree possible and preserve existing trees along their edges and in medians where safety is not compromised.

Policy 2.9 Encourage and facilitate tree planting/replacement programs along appropriate designated streets, corridors, and gateways in the county.

Objective 3.0 Link important greenspaces in the county.

Policy 3.1 Identify those habitats that should be linked in order to ensure their environmental health and the survival of the species that reside therein.

Policy 3.2 Explore development of a county/cities-wide system of greenways that meets environmental objectives and provides opportunities for hiking, horseback riding and biking. (The land included may be a blend of public, private, and private with public access similar to that which occurs with the Appalachian and other long distance trails.)

Policy 3.3 Continually monitor if and when the railroads may abandon routes in Morgan County and, if such occurs, be prepared to act to convert these “rails to trails” if possible.

Policy 3.4 Ensure, whenever reasonably possible, that conservation subdivsions link their conservation lands to those protected green or open spaces adjacent to the subdivision.

Policy 3.5 Explore the potential for using Hightower Road (the route of Sherman’s troops that runs on the north side of Dixie Highway and the railroad) as a key link in a cross country greenway/trail originating at Hard Labor Creek State Park.

Policy 3.6 Explore the feasibility of the incorporation of the power line easements into a countywide trail and greenway linkage system.

Objective 4.0 Support the continued existence of a viable agricultural and forestry sector in the county.

Policy 4.1 Support "right-to-farm" laws that ensure that existing farms are not forced out of operation because of conflicts with residential and commercial development.

Policy 4.2 Develop functional, realistic options whereby owners of undeveloped land can gain adequate value from their property without having to develop intensively, e.g., land banking, conservation easements, development rights programs, sale of water rights.

Policy 4.3 Support cost sharing arrangements with farmers at the federal, state, and local levels for projects that contribute to the attainment of the county's natural resource objectives.

Policy 4.4 Work to revise those state and local regulations, or the interpretation of those regulations, that may inhibit or prevent certain acceptable on-farm sales and commerical activities which can enhance the economic viability of the farm.

Policy 4.5 Encourage agricultural land preservation by ensuring that property tax policy is favorable to conservation efforts.

Objective 5.0 Support efforts and adopt regulations that help to retain and attract low intensity, land extensive activities, e.g., commercial hunting operations, horseback-riding resorts, and other agri-tourism, heritage tourism, and eco-tourism.

Objective 6.0 Educate and coordinate citizen boards and authorities to plan for and advise on the protection of open space, corridors, and gateways.

Objective 7.0 Identify and pursue funding sources for the protection of green and open space, viewscapes, and gateways.

Policy 7.1 Explore the adoption of dedicated public funding sources, e.g., a special option sales tax or portion thereof.

Policy 7.2 Advocate for the creation of a permanent fund for greenspace protection at the state level to which Morgan County and its municipalities could apply for assistance.

Policy 7.3 Work to interest the Trust for Public Land, the Turner Foundation, and other similar organizations in undertaking programs and initiatives in Morgan County.

Objective 8.0 Work to protect and as appropriate increase the level of tree cover in Morgan County.

Policy 8.1 Continue or initiate tree planting programs in all municipalities.

Policy 8.2 Establish county and municipal ordinances which prevent clear-cutting prior to development, retain certain types and/or quantities of existing trees, and specify appropriate canopy levels of either existing or planted trees. Such ordinances should not discourage normal and proper forestry practices.

Policy 8.3 Develop a program to protect significant hardwood forests and specimen trees still remaining in the county.

Policy 8.4 Investigate the possibility of participation in the Tree City program for all municipalities in the county.

Water Resources Goals and Policies

Goal 1.0 Manage and protect Morgan County's water resources in order to meet the current and future needs of the county's residents, economy, and natural environment.

Objective 1.0 Ensure that the supply of water is adequate to meet the county's needs.

Policy 1.1 Project water needs at build-out and determine whether the county currently has adequate water to meet those needs without harming the environment.

Policy 1.2 Limit the type and degree of development in high recharge areas.

Policy 1.3 Explore the use of gray water from both public and private treatment systems.

Policy 1.4 Adopt regulations that promote the conservation of water.

Policy 1.5 Secure legal rights to as much of the Apalachee River flow as possible.

Policy 1.6 Ensure that all State regulations concerning the limitation of inter-basin transfer of water resources are met or exceeded at the local level.

Policy 1.7 Explore the ramifications of water import for accelerating or limiting growth and develop policies and regulations as appropriate.

Policy 1.8 Delineate water short areas of the county and limit development in these areas to that which can demonstrate water self-sufficiency. Do not extend public systems to such locations unless they have been identified as desired development areas in the land use plan.

Policy 1.9 Limit the extension of public water lines to those areas that are incorporated cities or have been designated as "high density" in the land use plan. Do not allow taps for new users along these lines without land protection concessions.

Policy 1.10 Work with EPD to develop "safe yield" data for all hydrologic conditions in the county and limit withdrawals to these safe yields.

Policy 1.11 Protect those watersheds that are critical to insuring the supply of water to the county's various public water systems.

Policy 1.12 Minimize any detrimental affects on wetlands from the extension of infrastructure.

Objective 2.0 Protect the quality of the county's water resources.

Policy 2.1 Ensure that the discharge of treated water from public and private sewage treatment systems does not pose a health risk or harm the environment.

Policy 2.2 Ensure that development, industrial and agricultural activities do not pose a public health risk or harm the environment.

Policy 2.3 Work to ensure compliance with all erosion and sedimentation controls.

Policy 2.4 Support best management practices that help farmers reduce runoff from their operations.

Policy 2.5 Manage stormwater runoff in an environmentally responsible manner.

Policy 2.6 Limit the intensity and types of development whose runoff or emissions might adversely harm surface or groundwater resources.

Policy 2.7 Continue monitoring the possible effects on groundwater of the county's closed landfill.

Policy 2.8 Site any new disposal facilities such that their risk to ground and surface water is minimized.

Policy 2.9 Minimize the risk of water contamination from waste oil by developing an effective disposal and educational system.

Policy 2.10 Work with the state, NRCS, landowners, and others as appropriate to address those streams and other water bodies with identified contamination problems.

Policy 2.11 Work with governmental entities outside the county to ensure that streams and rivers that rise in other locations do not incur quality problems due to contamination from activities in other jurisdictions.

Objective 3.0 Protect property and structures from the effects of flooding.

Policy 3.1 Incorporate flood plain management considerations in land use planning and zoning regulations.

Policy 3.2 Continue to participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

Policy 3.3 Refine maps that define areas considered at risk for flooding used in the Federal Flood Insurance Program to ensure that such requirements are appropriate to the hazard.

Objective 4.0 Protect those water-dependent habitats that are critical for the survival of fish and wildlife.

Objective 5.0 Work with the state to protect the water rights of county property owners so that they are not incentivized to develop their land more quickly in order to protect its value.

Objective 6.0 Explore participation in Water First, Adopt-A-Watershed, the Georgia SWAP, and other similar programs.

Objective 7.0 Explore the need for a county-wide water authority or advisory board with representation from each city as well as the county as a whole.

Wildlife/Habitat Goals and Policies

Goal 1.0 Manage and protect Morgan County's wildlife resources and habitats to the benefit of the county's residents, economy, and environment.

Objective 1.0 Protect endangered, threatened, and at-risk species.

Policy 1.1 Identify such species and their location in the county.

Policy 1.2 Limit development in or direct development away from these locations.

Policy 1.3 When development limitations are not feasible without unduly restricting property rights, explore other means for protecting this habitat and the resident species of concern.

Objective 2.0 Support wildlife enhancement incentive programs, easements, and sanctuaries.

Objective 3.0 Identify and protect important wildlife corridors (see greenways section in Green/Open Space goals and policies).

Objective 4.0 Identify and develop programs for the control of exotic, nuisance, or invasive species, of wildlife and plants.

Objective 5.0 Explore the advisability of each city and other Morgan County communities becoming bird sanctuaries. (Madison already has this designation.)

Air, Noise, Light Goals and Policies

Goal 1.0 Contribute to maintaining the health, quality of life, and rural atmosphere of Morgan County through protecting air and visual quality from possible pollutants (e.g., particulates, odors, noise, light, signage, abandoned consumer products) and excluding or discouraging inappropriate industries.

Objective 1.0 Meet or exceed pertinent Federal and State standards for clean air in Morgan County.

Policy 1.1 Adopt and strictly enforce county-wide performance standards and other regulations covering nuisance industries and air quality.

Policy 1.2 Restrict through ordinances, educational flyers, signs and other appropriate measures, the unnecessary idling of diesel tractor rigs at truck stops and other locations.

Policy 1.3 Increase education, monitoring, and enforcement of regulations of controlled and other permitted burns in Morgan County.

Policy 1.4 Require notification of neighbors prior to a burn and limit permissible size of controlled burns.

Objective 2.0 Promote the importance of safe sound levels around our homes, towns, and workplaces.

Policy 2.1 Adopt and enforce throughout the county, regulations covering acceptable noise levels in residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Policy 2.2 Strictly enforce noise laws and regulations in both the county and its municipalities, e.g., mufflers, loud music, machinery, sirens.

Policy 2.3 Require permits for periodic neighborhood, public, or business events or activities where noise levels might exceed normally allowed levels.

Objective 3.0 Promote the importance and use of appropriate outdoor lighting in order to contribute to public safety and the maintenance of Morgan County's quality of life and rural atmosphere. Include these in municipal plans, zoning regulations, etc.

Policy 3.1 Adopt throughout the county, regulations covering appropriate outdoor lighting in residential, commercial, industrial, and historic areas.

Policy 3.2 Ensure outdoor lighting is so selected, situated, and designed as not to reflect directly into any public right-of-way, oncoming traffic, pedestrian walkway, not to spread sideways or up beyond what is necessary to attain one's illumination objectives, and not to create a nuisance across property boundaries.

Policy 3.3 Explore replacement of inefficient white lights along roads and streets and on government properties with lighting consistent with Policy 3.2.

Policy 3.4 Minimize the light impact of required safety lighting on towers and other structures on nearby residences and rural areas.

Objective 4.0 Review the adequacy of, modify or adopt as appropriate, and strictly enforce sign ordinances throughout the county and its municipalities.

Objective 5.0 Review the adequacy of, modify or adopt as appropriate and strictly enforce ordinances throughout the county and its municipalities that address the dumping and storing of abandoned automobiles, appliances, and other items that detract from the visual quality of the county and could negatively affect our tourist industry.

Objective 6.0 Explore adoption of a "quality of life" review of all residential, commercial, and industrial developments greater than a specified size that will,

among others, address possible effects of the project on air quality, noise, lighting, signage, and other similar considerations.

Lake Oconee/Hard Labor Creek State Park Goals and Policies

Goal 1.0 Capitalize on and effectively protect and manage the resources of Lake Oconee and Hard Labor Creek State Park to the benefit of Morgan County and its citizens.

Objective 1.0 Adopt appropriate laws and regulations that effectively protect the natural resource and experiential values of Lake Oconee and Hard Labor Creek State Park.

Objective 2.0 Explore the potential for festivals, competitions, and other activities in, on, or based from Lake Oconee and Hard Labor Creek State Park that benefit residents of the county economically and recreationally while protecting the resources and avoiding undue inconvenience to those who live nearby.

Objective 3.0 Better educate Morgan County residents as to the opportunities available at Lake Oconee and Hard Labor Creek State Park.

Objective 4.0 Encourage volunteerism of interested citizens through the creation of “Friends of the Lake” or “Friends of Hard Labor” type organizations and through programs of such groups and agencies as Riverkeepers, Georgia Wildlife Federation, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Objective 5.0 Undertake regular public-private cleanup initiatives along the Apalachee River and the shores of Lake Oconee in Morgan County.

Objective 6.0 Continue participation in tri-county initiatives (Morgan, Greene, Putnam) for Lake Oconee.

Objective 7.0 Coordinate with the three Lake Oconee property owners associations when developing plans for the protection and utilization of this resource.

Objective 8.0 Explore the potential for developing a trail along portions of the Georgia power setback which borders the Lake Oconee.

Objective 9.0 Work to develop a trail system (foot, bike, equestrian) from Rutledge to Hard Labor Creek.

Objective 10.0 Heighten the awareness of our legislative delegation and other elected local leaders of both Morgan and Walton Counties as to the value and needs of Hard Labor Creek State Park.

Objective 11.0  Adopt land use regulations that limit development density and types along the borders of Hard Labor Creek.

Objective 12.0  Heighten awareness of the historic value of various structures and sites within Hard Labor Creek State Park.

## Section Two: Historic Resources

### Introduction

Morgan County, Madison, Rutledge, Bostwick, Buckhead and numerous unincorporated Morgan County communities are recognized as places of cultural and historic value to the county, the state, and especially in the case of Madison, the nation. The cultural reality of present day Morgan County is that of a place where the historic development patterns characteristic of the South have been remarkably well preserved in a variety of architecturally distinctive structures, traditionally designed small towns, viable agricultural establishments, and unspoiled rural landscapes. Morgan County and its municipalities have long recognized the value of their ensemble of historic environments and have turned heritage tourism into a mainstay of the local economy.

The historic nature of Morgan County's physical form provides the context for local residents and visitors to understand the place, its origins, and its development. The City of Madison Historic Preservation Commission, Morgan County Conservancy, Landmarks Society, Historical Society, the Cultural Center, the African-American Museum, and numerous other organizations, families, and individuals have worked and continue to work for the preservation, maintenance, and promotion of Morgan County's historic assets. Documentation of these efforts are found in several studies, surveys, reports, plans and guidelines pertaining to the county's historic and cultural resources. As the extensiveness of these efforts cannot be duplicated in this comprehensive plan, what follows is a general indication of what has already been completed vis-à-vis Morgan County's cultural and historic resources. Additional reference documents and sources of information regarding historic resources in Morgan County are listed at the end of this section.

### 3.13 Historic Resources

Historic resources in Morgan County were first surveyed in 1974 by an amateur local historian under contract with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. This survey documented 229 structures in the county with another 119 inside the City of Madison. Another survey was compiled in 1987 by a history professor from the University of Georgia, but its results have never superceded the original survey. The copies of the 1974 survey in the Atlanta archives of the Georgia DNR are showing signs of wear. The map is in an extremely delicate condition and is nearly unreadable. Also the color slides are beginning to emulsify into the plastic binder sheaths.

Most of the historic structures identified were built after 1825, even though Morgan County was established in 1807. Two extremely rare log cabins from the period 1800-1825 were identified but one was subsequently moved in 1981. The bulk of early-to-mid 19th century structures are located in Madison, along the major county roads, and at river crossing sites. The communities of Rutledge, Bostwick, and Buckhead have more

structures from the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, and there are many such structures in Madison as well.

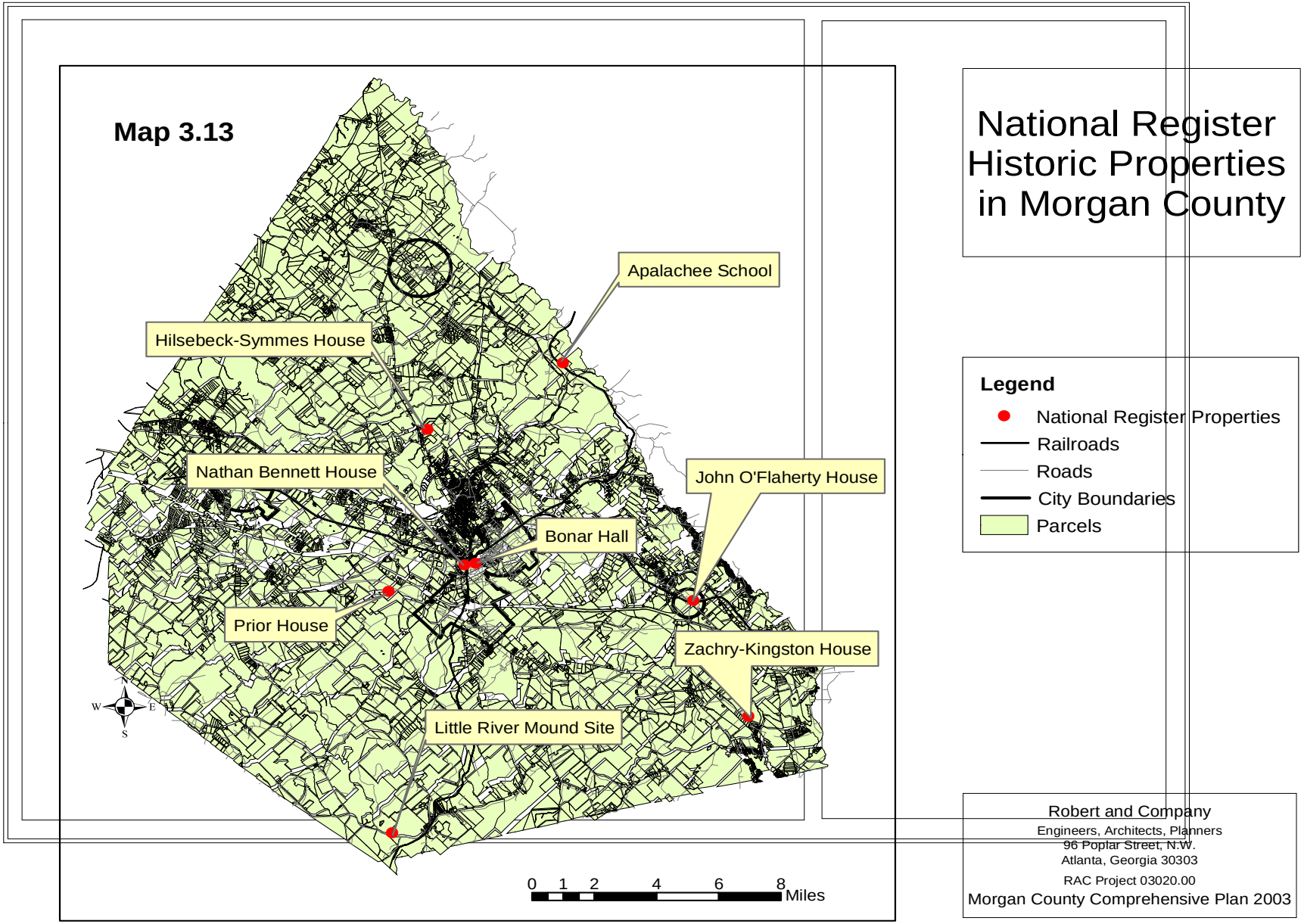
There is consensus among informed citizens and planners that a new Morgan County historic resources survey needs to be completed. Many historically significant resources were not surveyed in 1974 and later surveys as the more grand residential structures were given priority. If for no other reason, the current status of historic resources needs to be determined.

National Register Historic Buildings

As of 2003 the following sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings for Morgan County, (See Map 3.13):

| | Property/Resource Name | Address | City | Listed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***Apalachee School*** | 5060 Lower Apalachee Rd. | Apalachee | 05/26/2000 |
| 2 | ***Bennett, Nathan, House*** | Dixie Ave. | Madison | 11/13/1974 |
| 3 | ***Bonar Hall*** | Dixie Ave. | Madison | 01/20/1972 |
| 4 | ***Cedar Lane Farm*** | N of Madison off GA 83 | Madison | 02/24/1971 |
| 5 | ***O'Flaherty, John, House*** | 1000 Oconee Rd. | Buckhead | 08/29/1991 |
| 6 | ***Susie Agnes Hotel*** | Main St. | Bostwick | 07/01/1994 |
| 7 | ***Zachry-Kingston House*** | 6030 Bethany Rd. | Buckhead | 05/18/1987 |

**Map 3.13 National Register Historic Properties in Morgan County**

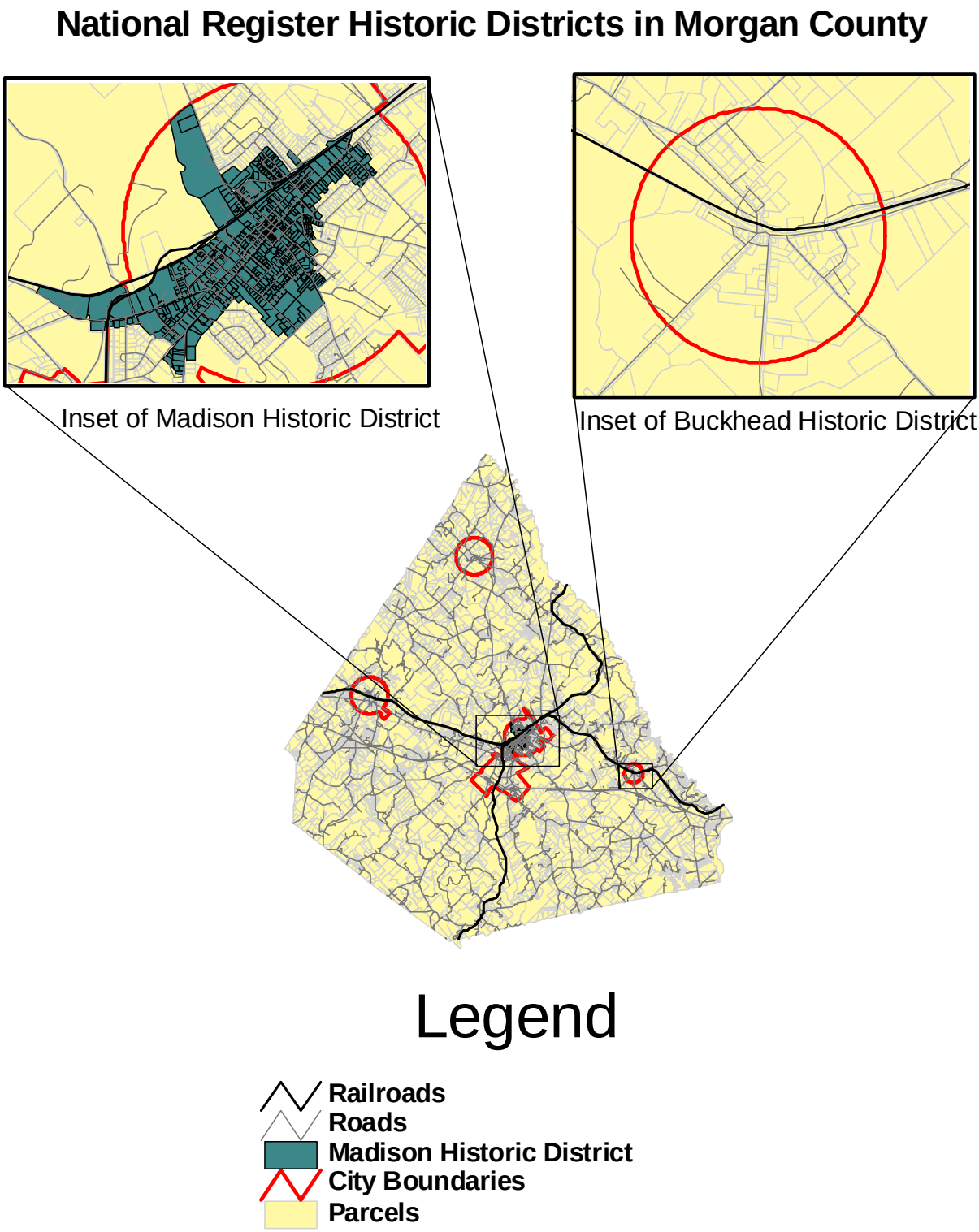


National Register Historic Districts

As of 2003 the following districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings for Morgan County (See Map 3.14):

| | District Name | Address | City | Listed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***Buckhead Historic District*** | Adjacent to Main St. and Parks Mill, Seven Islands and Baldwin Dairy Rds. | Buckhead | 03/01/2002 |
| 2 | ***Madison Historic District*** | Adjacent on both sides to U.S. 441 | Madison | 10/29/1974 |
| 3 | ***Madison Historic District (Boundary Increase)*** | Generally adjacent to Main St., Old Post Rd., Academy St., Dixie St., and Washington St. | Madison | 01/08/1990 |

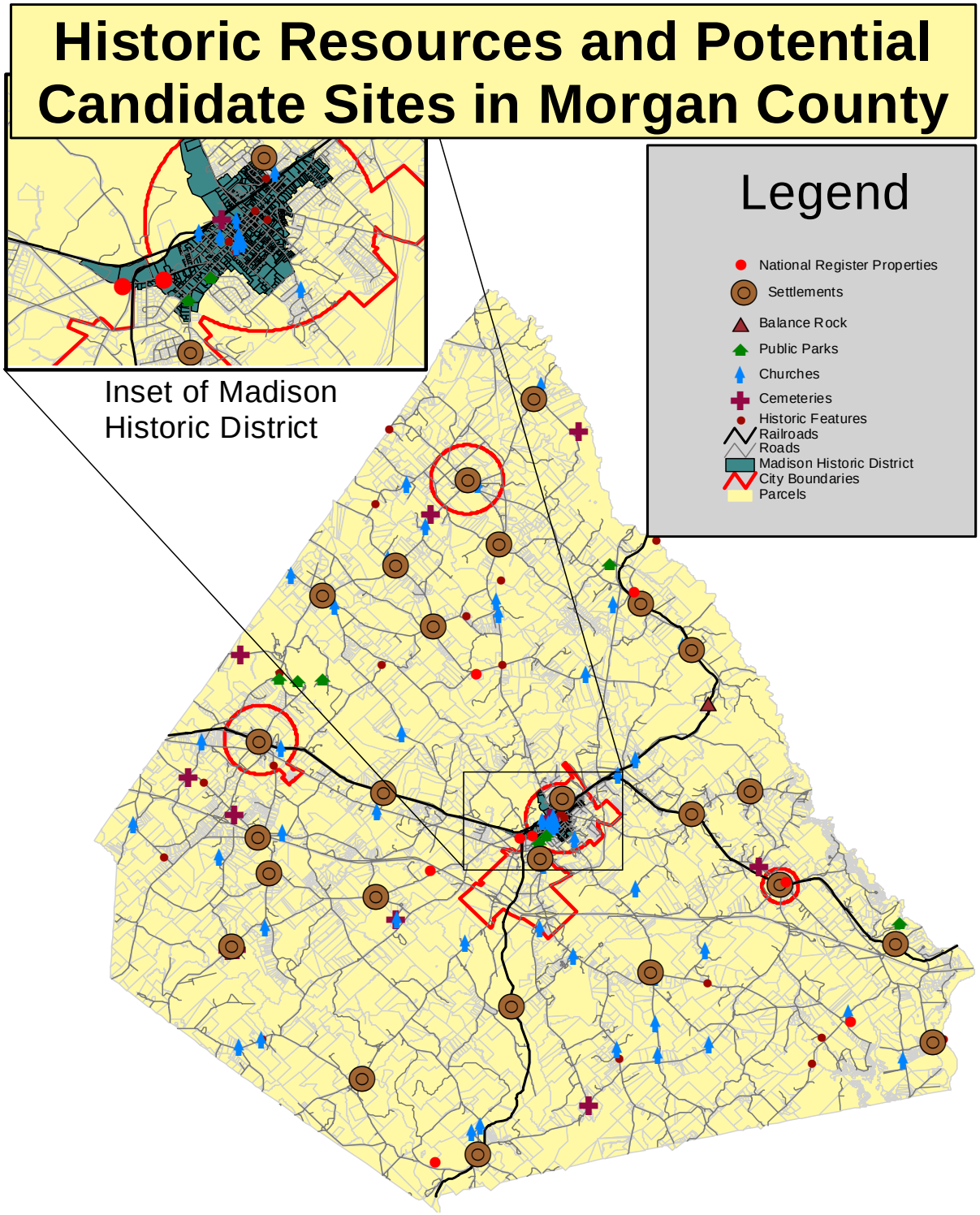
**Map 3.14 National Register Historic Districts in Morgan County**



Potential National Register Historic Properties

In addition to the recognized National Register Properties and Historic Districts, there are several potential candidates for National Register status in Morgan County and its municipalities (Map 3.15). The most obvious sites to investigate are the downtowns of the municipalities (Rutledge and Bostwick) and unincorporated communities (Apalachee, Godfrey, Fairplay, Swords, and Pennington) which have yet to be listed. Other potential candidates include churches, cemeteries, public parks, natural sites conducive to human activities, and settlement sites of earlier inhabitants. For a historic district nomination residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional resources can be listed simultaneously assuming that there is physical continuity and historic integrity remaining to the towns.

**Map 3.15 Historic Resources and Potential Candidate Sites in Morgan County**



### 3.14 Residential Resources

All homes built between 1924 and 1954 have become potentially eligible since the 1974 Morgan County Survey. Thus, many small bungalows, Tudor Revival brick homes, WWII tract housing, and early ranches should now be considered in the survey. Due to the residential boom in the later part of this era, a significant number of significant structures may be found.

### 3.15 Commercial Resources

In addition to the downtowns of Madison and Buckhead, Rutledge and Bostwick also have significant and well preserved commercial cores. Additionally, the small unincorporated communities have commercial centers of varying sizes and states of preservation.

### 3.16 Industrial Resources

Depots and related structures along railroad tracks are the most visible historic industrial resource candidates in the county. Those in Madison are already partially included in the historic district. Mill sites with adjacent worker housing and engineered structures such as dams are also found throughout the county and may have historic industrial significance.

### 3.17 Institutional Resources

Institutional resources in downtown Madison and Buckhead have already been identified and protected. The other cities are the most likely candidates for possible additions to this category. Documents in the Department of Natural Resources identify the structures in Hard Labor Creek State Park which were built by the CCC during the Great Depression as very good candidates for the National Register, and these structures appear to be in extremely fragile condition. Madison and Buckhead also need to have their institutional listings reviewed and updated as well due to the time elapsed since the 1974 survey.

### 3.18 Rural Resources (Landscapes, roads, crossings)

Morgan County's history is rooted in agriculture. Many historic farms are still in use, with many involved in the Centennial Farm program. Two centennial farms were identified as of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, and public input has identified further participation and site registration in this program as desirable. Rural scenes such as the canopy of Fairplay Street in Bostwick had been identified for further consideration in the

last plan. Historic crossroads communities and church/cemetery communities are also likely candidates (see map 3.14).

### 3.19 Historic, Archeological, and Cultural Sites

Significant sites include, among others, historic battlegrounds, cemeteries, and burial grounds. For the protection of these cultural resources, a list of identified sites is maintained by the State Archeologist. Because cultural resources are so fragile and vulnerable to theft, vandalism and unauthorized public visitation, locations are not identified in the plan. To date, all known cemeteries have been surveyed and documented by the county tax assessor however, ongoing research and surveying is needed to ensure that cemeteries are not overlooked. Additionally, according to documents in the Department of Natural Resources, there are three Indian Mound sites that are well known in the southern sector of the county currently undergoing an investigation for National Register eligibility status.

### 3.20 Preservation of Historic Resources

There have been great efforts in Morgan County over the years to maintain historic resources, and the some local agencies are renowned for their thoroughness, professionalism and successes in this arena. Madison is probably second only to Savannah in the State of Georgia as being a community known for its historic preservation accomplishments.

Organizations Involved

*The Madison Historic Preservation Commission*
Madison's local preservation program is administered by the Madison Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Established in 1987, this dedicated volunteer board protects the community's wealth of historic resources, first listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Because of the work of the HPC, Madison also qualifies as a Certified Local Government (CLG) community. In addition, the board serves as the Design Committee for the Madison Main Street Program. This civic board also works cooperatively to sponsor community preservation with local non-profits. The HPC's address is:

City of Madison
Historic Preservation Commission
P.O. Box 32
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 342-1251

*Madison Main Street Program*
Selected in 1984 to be one of the pilot cities for the Georgia Main Street Program, Madison established a special tax district for the central business district. The membership of the Downtown Business Council (DBC) includes every business enterprise and property owner within the district and is guided by the organizational branch, also known as the Main Street Advisory Board (MAB). Within the DBC membership, there are three group associations - Retail, Hospitality, and Professional. Main Street initiatives are devised and implemented by a full-time Main Street Director and three additional branches: promotions (Retail), design (see HPC), and economic restructuring (see DDA). Special projects and activities are organized by committees such as Antiques Co-Op, MadisonFest, etc. Main Street stresses cooperative efforts for a strong business core as well as downtown as a community gathering place for special events. The contact information is:

Madison Main Street
City of Madison
(706) 342-1251 Ext 6 *fax* (706) 342-3454
Attn: Ann Huff
P.O. Box 32
Madison, GA 30650
mainstreet@madisonga.com

*Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau*
The very successful community tourism program is guided by the Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), operating as a division of the Madison-Morgan Chamber of Commerce. Highly active since 1985, the bureau has a full-time director, a volunteer Advisory Board, and eight active committees. I n addition to operating the Madison Welcome Center, the CVB coordinates all regional marketing initiatives and promotes Madison and Morgan County to both national and international visitors. Tourism has become Madison's leading economic engine and the supplemental dollars generated from a local hotel/motel tax are instrumental to local economic vitality and community development.

*Morgan County Historical Society*
277 S. Main St.
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 342-9627

*Morgan County Landmarks Society*
Attn. Ira Block
P.O. Box 248
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 342-0988

*Madison-Morgan Cultural Center*
Located in Madison's restored 1895 Graded School Building, in the heart of Madison's beautiful historic district, the Center features exhibits on regional history and visual and performing arts. Permanent museum exhibits depict life in the region during the 19th to early 20th century. Three additional galleries hold a wide variety of ever-changing art exhibits. All performances are held in the Center's original auditorium. The apse-shape of this impressive wooden structure offers acoustical excellence. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 5pm, Sunday 2pm - 5pm. The Center is closed Mondays and Holidays.

434 S. Main Street.
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 342-4743
http://www.madisonmorgancultural.org/

*Madison-Morgan African-American Museum*
Located in the Horace Moore House, (c.1895), the African-American Museum is actively preserving African-American heritage and promoting awareness of the contributions the African-American community has made to the culture of the South. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday 10am until 4pm and Saturday 12pm until 4pm (last tour at 4pm).

156 Academy Street
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 342-9191

*Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center Department of Historic Preservation*
This organization provides services and data for the entire northeast Georgia region and has provided specific planning assistance to Morgan County. NEGRDC maintains a wealth of data on historic resources in the community and provides contacts for further research. The web address is: http://www.negrdc.org/departments/historic/org.asp

*Georgia Department of Natural Resources*
This is the primary State level organization that is involved in historic preservation initiatives and funding. The web address is: http://www.gashpo.org/

*United States Department of the Interior*
This is the division of the federal government that contains the various agencies that are responsible for historic preservation at the national level. The National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Buildings and other similar preservation organizations are coordinated under this agency.

### 3.21 Efforts to Date

1974 Historic Buildings survey of Morgan County (see above)
10 National Register Listings (see above)
Annual Heritage Tourism events (see above)
Heritage Museums (see above)

Regulations, Zoning and Incentives Used

*City of Madison Historic Preservation Ordinance*

*Morgan County Zoning Regulations*

*Rehabilitation Tax Credit*
The largest federal program designed to promote historic preservation. A 20% tax credit is offered for certified historic rehabilitation project expenditures related to income producing properties. Administered by the GA HPD of the GA DNR.

*Georgia's Historic Preservation State Tax Incentive Program*
This program provides owners with an 8 year freeze on property tax assessments on certified historic properties that have undergone substantial rehabilitation.

*Georgia's Main Street Program*
This program organizes, promotes, designs and economically restructures historic downtown business districts to be more economically viable.

*Georgia Heritage 2000 Program*
This program provides matching grants to local governments and non-profit organizations for the rehabilitation of Georgia and National Register listed historic properties.

*The Historic Preservation Fund*
This fund provides matching grants to states, 10% of which is reserved for certified local governments.

*The Local Development Fund*
This fund is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs providing matching grants to fund community improvement activities of local governments including historic preservation projects.

### 3.22 Cultural and Tourist Attractions in Morgan County

The Madison Historic district is the best-known heritage tourist attraction in Morgan County. In addition to containing the majority of the historic residential structures in the area, it is also home to the most ornate public and institutional structures in the county. The old commercial district of Madison is still a center of activity and has a vibrant business community. The Madison-Morgan County Cultural Center is on Main Street (US 441) and is often the first stop for visitors to the county. In addition to Madison, Rutledge has a vibrant historic core and is well-known within the region for its attractiveness. Buckhead and Bostwick also have historic downtowns and are making enhancements to increase their attractiveness and historic interest to draw visitors from outside the immediate community.

Hard Labor Creek State park is probably the best known public park in Morgan County. It is the largest such facility in the state and contains several historic structures from the 1930's as well as the Georgia State Astronomical Observatory.

Lake Oconee on the eastern edge of the county was impounded by Georgia Power in 1979 and has since become a well know resort destination for fishing and golfing.

### 3.23 Economic Importance of Heritage Tourism

Heritage Tourism has long been an important part of the economy of Morgan County. The preservation efforts that began in Madison have borne such magnificent dividends for the city that all other municipalities and the county at large have made efforts to join this economic engine. Morgan County has many well-preserved historic structures and viable historic downtown commercial districts in each of its four municipalities. The county's rural landscapes have also maintained much of their agricultural integrity and several farmsteads are now included on the seasonal Tour of Homes which began in Madison.

As one of the cleanest industries that a community can attract, heritage tourism can make a major contribution towards meeting the County's goals of economic development and job creation. Heritage tourism is also compatible with the strong desire to maintain the traditional quality of life and the beautiful physical form of Morgan County. One of the challenges facing Morgan County in the years ahead will be to keep its economy growing while mitigating some of the possible side effects of growth such as urban sprawl and environmental degradation. Historic preservation offers an alternative to sprawl and saves public dollars by avoiding the need to build the infrastructure necessary to service new developments.

Tourism is the third largest industry in America. Tourism is Georgia's fastest growing industry and the second largest employer after agriculture. It provides 14% of the State's tax revenues. Morgan County stands to gain from the tourism industry even more than other parts of the state due to several favorable conditions. The top three tourist

destinations in Georgia are Metro Atlanta (38%) the Atlantic Coast (24%) and the Appalachian Mountains (13%). Although Morgan County is a rural county it is immediately adjacent to Metro Atlanta, the most visited destination. The single most popular tourist attraction in the state is the Savannah Historic District which is visited by 14% of all visitors to the state. It is followed by Underground Atlanta at 13% which is also a historic-heritage tourism site. Stone Mountain, relatively close to Morgan County, is the third most popular tourist attraction in Georgia with 9%. Overall, historic attractions account for 34% of all visitors to Georgia which means Morgan County stands to benefit even more with nationally known sites such as Historic Madison. Furthermore, heritage tourism travelers spend more money and stay longer at destinations than the average U.S. traveler according to a Georgia Department of Natural Resources report. Heritage travelers tend to spend $688 per trip and tend to stay 5.2 nights as compared to $425 and 3.3 nights for all other travelers.

Research has also confirmed that there is an extremely strong connection between a place being a popular tourist destination and a desirable community in which to live and work. Many of the top tourist destinations retain their appeal because their historic character has been preserved. Thus there is also an extremely strong connection between tourism and historic preservation.

### 3.24 Additional Reference Works and Information Sources

Perhaps the best reference work to start with is the 1993 Comprehensive Plan for Morgan County. It gives a detailed overview of county history and previous survey efforts. Others include:

- William Chapman's **The Madison Historic Preservation Manual: A Handbook for Owners and Residents** which is available on the Madison Historic Preservation Commission's website (see above)
- Elizabeth Z. Macgregor's 1974 National Register nomination
- Dale Jaeger's 1986 nomination report for the City of Madison
- The Morgan County file in the Georgia Room at the University of Georgia Library-Athens, Georgia
- Vanishing Georgia Collection in the Georgia State Archives-Morrow, Georgia

### 3.26 Historic Resources Needs and Goals

Goal 1.0 Ensure the protection of Morgan County's significant historic resources* in order to:

- Maintain the visual character and sense of place unique to the county and its cities,
- Preserve an architectural and rural legacy for future generations, and
- Reap the economic benefits of heritage preservation

*Historic resources include but are not limited to home and farm structures, sites, and outbuildings; neighborhood, recreation, and commercial/industrial sites; schools; churches; cemeteries; Civil War and Native American sites; archeological sites; vistas, and historic, railroad, and other transportation routes.

Objective 1.0 Ensure the continuity and comprehensiveness of County archival efforts.

Policy 1.1 Formalize an archivist position within the County government.

Policy 1.2 Expand the existing archives through cooperative efforts and creative programs.

Policy 1.3 Cross-reference county resources with other archival resources in the cities and unincorporated areas of the county.

Policy 1.4 Ensure public access and ease of access to archival information.

Policy 1.5 Investigate improved storage and backup measures and implement as appropriate.

Policy 1.6 Support oral history initiatives and make this information part of the archival system.

Objective 2.0 Establish a Morgan County historic preservation advisory board with representatives from both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county to serve the following purposes:

(1) Serve as an advocate/liaison regarding preservation issues,
(2) Serve as a clearinghouse for preservation information,
(3) Serve as an educational vehicle using local forums,
(4) Serve to bring in preservation resources when necessary,
(5) Assist owners of historic properties as to how to more knowledgeably protect, improve, or develop these properties, and
(6) Develop a prioritized plan for protecting the most significant historic resources.

Objective 3.0 Identify and document existing historic resources and initiate recognition measures.

Policy 3.1 Inventory Morgan County resources not currently documented.

Policy 3.2 Continue to identify National Register eligible resources in municipalities and the unincorporated county.

Policy 3.3 Pursue National Register nomination for eligible county and municipality resources.

Policy 3.4 Encourage use of State and Federal recognition programs (e.g., Centennial Farm Program) to heighten heritage appreciation, particularly of non-residential resources.

Policy 3.5 Develop a map of historic resources that is widely available to the public including visitors, residents, school groups, and genealogists.

Policy 3.6 Convert Madison's historic resources data to standardized state forms/database.

Objective 4.0 Protect historic resources through local designation, regulation, partnership, and recognition programs.

Policy 4.1 Explore adoption of a historic preservation ordinance for Rutledge.

Policy 4.2 Explore countywide Certified Local Government status.

Policy 4.3 Identify and pursue landmark opportunities not yet achieved in Madison.

Policy 4.4 Identify and participate in joint public-private preservation opportunities.

Policy 4.5 Support the preservation and educational efforts of local historical, cultural, and preservation groups.

Policy 4.6 Participate on the Regional Development Council's Natural and Historic Resources Committee.

Objective 5.0 Promote the adaptive use of historic resources.

Policy 5.1 Identify, seek, and encourage the use of State and Federal preservation incentive programs.

Policy 5.2 Explore a local preservation incentive program in the City of Madison and any Certified Local Government areas that may be created in Morgan County.

Policy 5.3 Explore the creation of incentive programs for preservation parallel to those for conservation and greenspace.

Policy 5.4 Find productive uses for the Susie Agnes Hotel in Bostwick for when its restoration is complete.

Policy 5.5 Rehabilitate the City Hall (Old Jail) and the old depot site in Buckhead for public use.

Policy 5.6 Pursue opportunities for low and moderate income housing, to include housing for seniors, through the adaptation and rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Objective 6.0 Continue to capitalize on the economic benefits of historic preservation.

Policy 6.1 Quantify the importance of historic preservation beyond quality of life and specifically in terms of heritage tourism.

Policy 6.2 Educate residents, businesses, and public officials regarding the benefits of heritage tourism.

Policy 6.3 Work with the Chamber of Commerce to maximize and market the potential use of heritage resources for the film industry.

Policy 6.4 Continue to participate in multi-jurisdictional trail systems.

Policy 6.5 Explore and capitalize on any parallel benefits (economic, marketing, administrative, etc.) of similar resources and markets, e.g., natural resource protection, active and passive recreation, retail, greenspaces, parks, trails, pedestrian routes, rails, biking, equestrian, and scenic corridors, arts and antiques.

Policy 6.6 Create a local model for a Hometown Living concept to assist small retail markets (similar to Main Street and Better Hometown) for use by small towns and crossroads communities, perhaps run through the Chamber.

Policy 6.7 Develop programs and events to highlight and celebrate local history and historic resources as part of the centennials or bicentennials of the County and its municipalities.

Policy 6.8 Identify and pursue funding and grants appropriate to all feasible economic opportunities available for capitalizing on historic preservation.

Objective 7.0 Follow a high standard of historic preservation sensitivity and coordination with appropriate preservation advisory groups in public building and facility projects.