

Clemson researchers launch website to identify abandoned residential construction sites

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CLEMSON — The public can help Clemson University researchers identify abandoned residential construction sites using a new interactive online tool at www.abandoneddevelopments.com.

The researchers developed the website to identify potential sources of sediment pollution. The research is being conducted by faculty members Elena Mikhailova, Christopher Post and Julia L. Sharp and master's student Josh Werts.

In the past several years following the burst of the housing bubble, an unprecedented number of residential construction sites in Upstate South Carolina have been left unfinished, according to the website. This may allow soil to erode into streams and lakes past unmaintained erosion-control devices.


Initial research in Greenville, Spartanburg and Pickens counties identified more than 100 unfinished residential construction sites — many showing evidence of sediment release to local water bodies that could pose risks to aquatic ecosystems. A number of these abandoned sites lie distant from centers of population and could be slow to recover from the economic crisis.

Website visitors can submit the locations as well as pictures and comments about their own subdivisions or abandoned sites they have identified. Submitted sites and pictures then are available in the interactive map for users to explore along with several sample sites from the initial study.

The research is supported by the South Carolina Water Resources Center and the Clemson University Public Service and Agriculture Next Generation Graduate Fellowship.

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