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A Brief Assessment of Extension Land Use  
Educational Publications

by

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## A Brief Assessment of Extension Land Use Educational Publications

Land use policy is once again a focus of attention for many agricultural economists. Extension educational programs in this area have produced a large number and variety of publications related to land use. A request by the authors to the fifty Extension Directors for available printed materials on this subject generated a stack of publications seventeen inches high. The purpose of this paper is to briefly review what is in that stack, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the literature, and offer some suggestions.

This review of Extension's land use publications is appropriate for three reasons: (1) printed media are an important clientele communications channel for Extension professionals and every effort to upgrade and improve publications should be made; (2) cross-fertilization between Extension progress improves the total educational effort; and (3) exchange of publications is an important method of communication among Extension professionals.

### Extension's Land Use Educational Publications

Forty-one Extension Directors responded to a request for available printed materials in land use.<sup>1</sup> Four states--Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts--had publications in process at that time. Materials supplied by six states--Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin--were not considered educational publications in the same sense as the remaining materials.<sup>2</sup>

Package Approach - Subject matter is the only common characteristic of the publications from the remaining thirty-two responding states.

The diversity in format and content is remarkable. North Carolina's educational "package", *Land Use Planning in North Carolina*,<sup>3</sup> represents coordinated series of pamphlets on land use. Another "package" of eight topically-coordinated pamphlets is available from Texas and is unique in the sense that it provides in the first pamphlet a historical perspective for the development of land use patterns in the state.

Wyoming also uses a "package" format to produce *Series Six*, a set of six very brief (two-page) treatments of related aspects of land use and community planning.

Case Study - Only one state uses the case study approach to land use education publications. Illinois has an educational package, *Illiville, Illinois: Planning Documents*, which consists of (hypothetical) annual reports from a city and a planning commission, a review of state laws, long-range plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision controls, and other related materials. A modified case study approach was used in one publication coming out of Utah, *Workbook in Land Use Planning* (Germanow and Grimsley)

Bulletins - Several states provide land use planning information in Extension bulletin or circular form. One of the most comprehensive of these is *Using Comprehensive Planning in Montana* (House). Other bulletins include *A Guide for County Land Use Planning: Colorado* (Davis and Sorensen), *Some Legal Aspects of Land Use Planning in the Mountain State* (Zagaris) and *Performance Standards: A Technique for Controlling Land Use* (Stockham).

Others - The remaining publications can be classified as *potpourri*.

Various issues of several newsletters including *Trade Secrets*, (Mississippi), *Community and Resource Development Briefs* (Clemson), and *Kentucky Economics Topics* have devoted issues to land use. In many cases these newsletters appear to have become integral parts of educational programs. Numerous other types of publications address some specific subset of the land use issue in some detail. Examples of this are *Open Space Taxation* (Barron and Florea), *Transfer of Development Rights* (Chavooshian and Norman) and *Conservation Easements* (Liden).

#### A Brief Assessment

Charles Gratto has developed a general framework which integrates the main features of the public affairs education process. The Gratto issue-cycle flow diagram is shown in Figure 1.

Participants in the resolution of a public issue such as land use planning generally begin at some point of concern (1). The search for resolution generates discussion which gives the issue (2) a name and defines in action terms. Interests conflict (3) and debate is generated over priorities for resource allocations. The debate forces a ranking of priorities (4) and more objective and scientific knowledge defines the issue in more realistic terms. The structure (5) of the problem can be seen more clearly although objective views of the issue do not converge. Policy alternatives (6) are defined and participants evaluate each in terms of complex social and economic dimensions. Some public choice (7) is forthcoming which is followed by action (8), implying

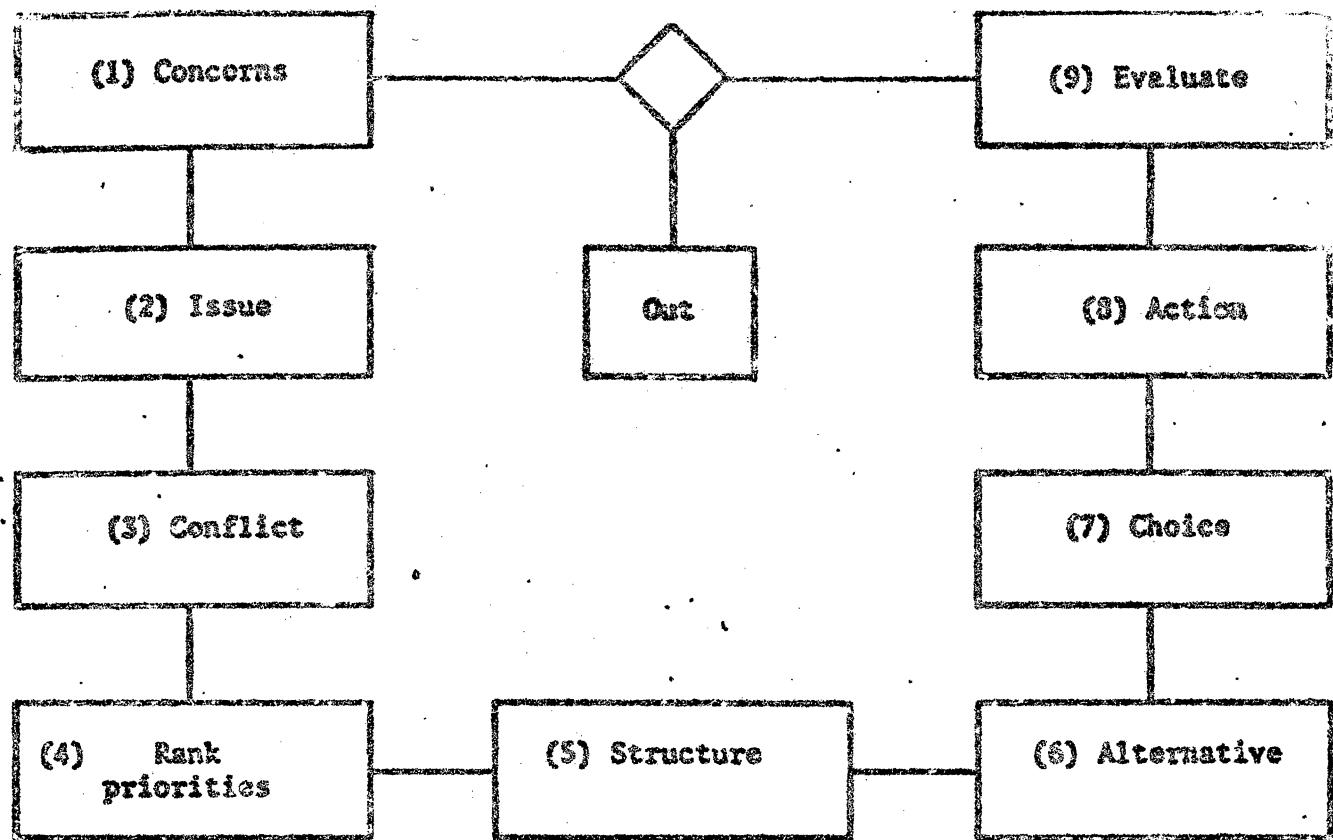


Figure 1. Issue cycle flow chart

Source: Gratto

either change or continuation of status quo. Finally, a period of evaluation (9) follows in which consequences and effects of the action are weighed. If the action generates "satisfaction" the cycle recedes; "dissatisfaction" causes the cycle to resume.

Intervention of public affairs education can occur at any point (cell). In terms of the land use issues, *awareness education* programs include information (publications) illustrating and defining the land use issue and outlining the historical perspective for the current controversy (cells 1,2,3). *Policy alternatives education* programs provide information (publications) on the planning process, present land use control techniques, present federal and state legislation, and proposed new control techniques (cells 4,5,6). And finally, *consequence evaluation education* programs focus on citizen involvement in public choice, effectiveness of land use controls, and implications of land use planning for various interest groups (cells 7,8,9).

#### Classifications of Extension Publications

The various state's publications were classified into at least one of the educational categories (Table 1). Because educational intervention can come at any point in the issue cycle, it was not expected that every state would have materials in every category. It should however, be reasonable to assume that for all states, publications are available in some form for all categories.

Awareness Education--Thirteen states have materials appropriate for intervention in the awareness phase of the issue cycle.<sup>4</sup> One of the

best of these publications is N.C. State's "Planning for Tomorrow's Communities." The text begins with the warning: "The landscape around us has taken on new and controversial aspects under pressures from technological and social changes." Pursuing that theme, the land use policy issue is outlined for North Carolinians in terms of population growth, employment land use patterns, and the planning and choices ahead. This type of information can assist people in defining more precisely their concerns about use and development of land resources.

While there are good examples of awareness type publications which outline the problem and give some perspective, there is a paucity of information on historical development. Texas is the only state with a publication which traces the development of the present state land use pattern.

Policy Alternatives Education--In the second phase of the issue cycle, the policy/alternatives educational effort, publications are abundant. Nineteen states have publications on the functioning of local planning agencies. Many of these provide a step-by-step explanation of the comprehensive planning and land use regulation process. For small group education, the *Utah Workbook in Land Use Planning* (Germanow and Grinsley) seems to be a particularly appealing document for use in this area.

Publications related to present control techniques are plentiful. The *Wyoming Series Six* covers zoning in two pages under the title, "Don't Talk to Me About Zoning". South Carolina has extensive and detailed examinations of both zoning law and subdivision control--a total of 92 pages (McLemore, Ledbetter). Between these extremes are numerous

Table 1. Extension land use education publications by state and area of emphasis.

<u>AWARENESS EDUCATION</u>	<u>POLICY ALTERNATIVES EDUCATION</u>	<u>CONSEQUENCE EVALUATION EDUCATION</u>
<p>(1) <i>Problem Situation and Perspective:</i> Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Texas, Wyoming.</p> <p>(2) <i>Historical Perspective:</i> Texas.</p>	<p>(1) <i>Local Planning Process, Agencies, Functions:</i> Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming.</p> <p>(2) <i>Present Land Use Controls:</i> Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, Wyoming.</p> <p>(3) <i>Federal and State Legislation:</i> Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.</p> <p>(4) <i>Proposed New Planning and Control Techniques:</i> Alabama, Connecticut, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, West Virginia.</p>	<p>(1) <i>Citizen Involvement in Public Choice:</i> Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas.</p> <p>(2) <i>Effectiveness of Land Use Controls:</i> Missouri, Montana, Washington.</p> <p>(3) <i>Implications of Land Use Planning:</i> North Carolina, Wyoming.</p>

publications differing widely in emphasis and format.

Most of the print is, justifiably we think, devoted to the police power techniques of control--zoning, subdivision regulation, building codes. Without much question these are the most familiar of land use controls. If there are important weaknesses in the coverage of zoning, we see these as standing out. First, there is virtually no mention of the *Model Land Development Code* of the American Law Institute. This is intended as a replacement for the current state enabling legislation and could go a long way to improve inadequacies in local planning and zoning. Secondly, we don't think sufficient attention has been devoted to the political-legal problems of planning and zoning. A few pointers from Richard Babcock's, *The Zoning Game* might prove useful in some publications.

On land use controls other than zoning, the available material is sparse. Washington State has a pamphlet on open space taxation (Barron and Florea). However, no treatment has been given to (1) the "takings" issue, (2) use of public expenditures to control land use, or (3) non-zoning (i.e., deed restrictions, covenants).

Several states have publications on state land use laws. The University of Arkansas, for instance, has published two "Guidelines" outlining statutory requirements for municipal and county planning. Only a few states have published information on proposed federal land use legislation, mostly in newsletter form.

Policy alternatives are probably the most important segment of the second phase of the issue cycle. Yet, only eight states have

publications which address one or more of proposed new land use controls. The work of most notoriety is New Jersey's "Transfer of Development Rights: A New Concept in Land Use Management". (Chevcochian and Norman) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a modification of zoning law intending to facilitate markets for development rights to land. It is one of several alternatives to be put before clientele groups.

One Oregon publication reviews some of the newer techniques for land use control (Pease and Stockham). Topics included in this publication are performance zoning, TDR's, conservation easements, windfall gains taxes, public purchase-leaseback.

Consequence Evaluation Education--The third phase of the issue cycle, consequence evaluation education, is an area of increasing importance. Many states are initiating new land use controls. Extension should be actively engaged in providing feedback on the consequences and impacts of these new programs. The paucity of publications in this area suggest we may be doing otherwise.

With respect to citizen involvement in public choice about land, only six states have any publications in this area. None of these are evaluative in any sense. Some explain who is involved in the planning process and at what points citizen input is possible (desired?)

Very little critical evaluation of land use control effectiveness is available. Information on taxation is plentiful enough to provide the basis for a fair evaluation of taxation as a land use control. But what about zoning? purchase of development rights? conservation easements?

Implications of land use planning for agriculture and other groups is another topic addressed in weak fashion--brief mention is made in North Carolina and Wyoming literature. No one has come forward to illustrate the trade-offs faced by farmers in the choice between preservation or non-preservation of agricultural land. No one has come forward with information about residential tax burdens under preferential assessment farmland. These and other implications are important in matters of public choice.

#### Some Suggestions

From this review of Extension land use educational publications, the following tentative suggestions (challenges?) are offered:

- (1) Can we do justice in awareness education without tracing the development and forces, social and economic, behind the present land use pattern? We think not. What was done in the Texas "Historical Perspective" article, in Phillip Raup's "Achieving Land Use in the Public Interest", and in the League of Women Voters', "Land Use: Can We Keep Public and Private Rights in Balance?" needs to be done for every state having an awareness education effort. Whether it is oil in Texas, irrigation in California, or coal in Kentucky, there have been dominant social and economic variables which have been prime determinants of the dominant land use pattern of development. These ought to be brought into sharp relief against some of the new determinants: redistribution of

property rights, expanding federal regulations impinging on land use, reversal in population centralization, the amelioration of externality problems.

(2) There is a clear need for additional effort in laying out the policy alternatives. In many cases, the public perceives the land use issue as "zoning v. no regulation." This is an unfortunate situation but a challenging opportunity for the educator. As W.L. Gibson, Jr. has recently written:

The problems involved in developing a workable land-use policy are not ones of zero-risks, zero-use conflicts, or zero-restraints on resource use. The problems are how to develop enough public support at the appropriate levels of government where capability exists to choose among alternative courses of action consistent with present knowledge. Such public support can arise only from an enlightened public. [p.2]

(3) Research now published or underway provides some information on the consequences and impacts of land use controls. This information, where available, needs to be digested, synthesized, popularized and published for lay consumption. Where the information is not available, research should be initiated, if only on an informal basis. This is nowhere more critical than with the topic of implications of land use controls for agriculture and rural areas.

Footnotes

1. Doubtless we did not receive all the publications available. This is unfortunate but unavoidable given the structure of communication among professional Extension economists.
2. Included in this group were publications on selecting home sites, research bulletins on land taxation, bibliographies, conference proceedings, and related state government documents.
3. The North Carolina package has been adapted in whole or in part for use in Arkansas and South Dakota.
4. ECOP has recently published some land use educational pamphlets of which #1 addresses the problems, situation and perspective.

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