



Ruth Brock  
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News Release

## **Do You Own Heir Property?**

Although you may have never heard of the term “heir property,” you may own this type property or know someone who owns heir property. Heir property is defined as land held in common by the descendants (or heirs) of someone who has died without a will or whose estate did not go through probate. Probate is the court process through which a will is proven valid and the estate is administered according to the terms of the will.

According to Faith R. Rivers, Assistant Professor, Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT, “Ownership of heirs’ property is a complex legal, family, community, economic and political problem – a deeply systemic problem – that affects thousands of families” in the country. These families are at constant risk of losing their property because each interest is assignable to others. Many families are thrown into turmoil in the effort to divide property interests and share responsibilities. Where there is an environment of rapid economic growth, such as in much of Alabama, heirs’ property is particularly vulnerable to development and exploitation – all within the operation of the law.”

If you want to learn more about this type ownership, Alabama Cooperative Extension System is offering free seminars on the subject. The guest speaker is Mr. Craig Baab, attorney with the Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice in Montgomery. He has a wealth of knowledge regarding issues surrounding heir property. These seminars provide awareness of the risks involved in heir property, as well as informing landowners of respective rights and the proper steps to protect the land. Plan to attend the following scheduled for St. Clair County:

**Thursday, June 12 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
Jeff State Community College, Pell City Campus  
500 College Drive  
Pell City, AL  
Call (205) 338-9416 to register

For more information, please call Regional Extension Agents Ruth Brock at 205-612-4066 or Synithia Williams at (205) 329-1148.

Sources:

[www.vermontlaw.edu/emplibrary/faithpropertypreservationextract.pdf](http://www.vermontlaw.edu/emplibrary/faithpropertypreservationextract.pdf)

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<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/agec/heirproperty/>

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