



STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

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Governor Announces New Land Conservation Grants and Loans
Funding Approved for Projects in Walker and Pulaski Counties and Athens-Clarke County

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today the approval of four new Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) grants and one low interest loan for projects in Walker and Pulaski Counties and Athens-Clarke County. The Land Conservation Council approved the funding at its quarterly meeting on Jekyll Island.

“This program and its shared funding represent a collaborative approach to land conservation,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “I’m pleased that these natural and cultural resources will be preserved and enjoyed for generations to come.”

In Walker County, 1,565 acres consisting of the ridge, slopes and bottomland of scenic McLemore Cove will be permanently protected through a purchase by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). An additional 295 acres will be purchased by Walker County. This property is one of the most scenic locations in Georgia where the Lookout Mountain escarpment drops more than 1,000 feet to the valley floor. McLemore Cove is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property contains a handful of historic structures and numerous high priority wildlife habitats.

The GLCP is contributing a \$6,497,080 grant and providing a low interest loan to Walker County. Additional funding is being provided by federal and private grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Open Space Institute and through a discounted sale of the property by the landowner.

Also in Walker County, 740 acres will be permanently protected through the purchase of a conservation easement. Owned by the Girl Scout Council of Moccasin Bend, this property

borders DNR's Zahnd Natural Area, contains the headwaters of the Little River, and features rare habitats including underground streams, freshwater springs, caves and talus slopes. The easement will be held by the Lookout Mountain Conservancy and will allow for the continued use of 100 acres as a Girl Scout camp while permanently prohibiting development on the remainder of the property.

The GLCP is contributing a \$750,000 grant. Additional funding is being provided by grants from private foundations including the Open Space Institute and through a deeply discounted sale of the easement by the landowner.

"The acquisition of this land is vital to preserving our wildlife in North Georgia," said Senator Jeff Mullis. "Through the cooperation of our local and state governments, we are excited to see this area protected."

In Athens-Clarke County, the first stage of a Middle Oconee River greenway west of downtown Athens will be protected through the acquisition of a seven acre property. Part of the largest remaining block of greenspace within the Athens I-10 loop, this tract will eventually serve as the trail head for a critically needed multi-use path and wildlife corridor linking Ben Burton Park and the Beech Haven area of Athens.

The GLCP is contributing a \$77,750 grant. Matching funds are being provided by Athens-Clarke County and a discounted sale of the property by the landowner.

Senator Bill Cowser of Athens, one of Governor Perdue's Floor Leaders in the Georgia Senate, said "Collaborative efforts of landowners, the Athens-Clarke County Government, and the State of Georgia are making it possible for Georgians to enjoy green space for generations to come."

In Pulaski County on the banks of the Ocmulgee River, a private landowner is donating a permanent conservation easement on 125 acres to the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). The property contains pine and natural hardwood forests and is located adjacent to DNR's Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area.

The GLCP is providing a \$10,000 grant to help pay for some of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the GFC and the landowner in securing this donated easement.

"This is a prime example of how a public-private partnership should work," said House Floor Leader Jimmy Pruett. "I am happy to see that this partnership will benefit the preservation of Georgia's Natural Resources."

“I applaud the GLCP for aiding the Georgia Forestry Commission in securing this forest area,” said Senator Ross Tolleson. “It is great to see the conservation of this beautiful land along the banks of the Ocmulgee River.”

Georgia Land Conservation Program

The GLCP is managed by the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) and projects are approved by the Georgia Land Conservation Council. The program offers grants for fee title or conservation easement purchases from the Georgia Land Conservation Trust Fund. It also offers low-interest loans for fee title or conservation easement purchases from the Georgia Land Conservation Revolving Fund. Tax incentives are also available for donations and discounted sales of conservation lands or conservation easements. Since the program’s inception, 54 projects totaling 67,336 acres have been approved by the Council.

Conservation lands are permanently protected lands that are undeveloped and meet one or more of the goals of the Georgia Land Conservation Act. The goals include water quality protection, flood protection, wetlands protection, reduction of erosion, protection of riparian buffers and areas that provide natural habitat and corridors for native plant and animal species. The goals also include the protection of prime agricultural and forestry lands, protection of cultural and historic sites, scenic protection, recreation (boating, hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting) and the connection of areas contributing to these goals.

Governor Perdue introduced the Georgia Land Conservation Act to encourage the long-term conservation and protection of the state’s natural, cultural and historic resources in the 2005 session of the General Assembly. The Georgia Land Conservation Act passed with broad bipartisan support and Governor Perdue signed it into law on April 14, 2005.

Applications for land conservation grants or loans are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Applications and more information about the program are available at www.glcp.org.

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