

#### A Georgia Where People and the Environment Thrive.



The Georgia Conservancy is a statewide, member-supported conservation organization. Our work for environmental advocacy, land conservation, coastal protection, sustainable growth and outdoor stewardship recognizes the connection between the environment, the economy and our quality of life.

#### FRONT COVER

On February 25, 1967, the Georgia Conservancy is founded at the mill ruins along the banks of Sweetwater Creek. The protection of the surrounding acres as a State Park would be one of the organization's first successful endeavors.

# Our Mission Is To Protect & Conserve Georgia's Natural Resources Through Advocacy, Engagement & Collaboration.

#### WHAT WE DO

The Georgia Conservancy's five programmatic areas work throughout the state to advance our mission and conserve Georgia's land and water.





### **OUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE**



Protect, conserve, and restore Georgia's land, water, and biodiversity.



Promote and implement sustainable practices throughout Georgia.



Remain Georgia's leading conservation organization.



Acquire the resources needed for long-term financial viability.









#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

For one day in August 2017 it seemed like the entire nation descended upon a narrow strip of America from coast to coast to experience a once-in-a-generation opportunity. A total solar eclipse brought together millions of strangers to witness one of the planet's greatest natural phenomena.

As I sat watching the jaw-dropping solar eclipse in my hometown of Toccoa, Georgia, it was a reminder of the beautiful power of the natural world to bring together people from all walks of life and from all political persuasions. Just a few weeks later, the entirety of our state's 39 million acres was impacted by Hurricane Irma. Once again, I was inspired by the coming together of Georgians – this time to support their neighbors in need. Both of these natural events reaffirmed for me the important work that we are doing here at the Georgia Conservancy. It's work that we've been doing every day for 50 years.

Since 1967, our goal has been to build a consensus around the pressing needs for conservation in our state. Like the amazing diversity of our geography, so too is our population. Our many differences, whether political, racial or religious, contribute to a dynamic Georgia, one with a vast variety of visions for our future. The conservation space is where work to find a shared vision, one that doesn't have to sacrifice our land and our water for progress, one that doesn't pit the environment against the economy, and one that provides all Georgians with a healthy future. To do that, though, we must all come together to find a common path forward.

We know this because of our long and consistent engagement with leaders and citizens across this state in our effort to tackle Georgia's conservation challenges. While our differences are many, we can all agree that every man, woman and child wants and deserves clean water, clean air and land – elements that are all essential to our livelihoods.

As you will see in our 2017 Impact Report, our programmatic work is focused on finding this common path forward. Through our Stewardship Trips program, we've led nearly 3,000 people into nature this year, from our barrier islands to the Cumberland Plateau, turning adventure seekers into advocates for our state's most precious places. Our Advocacy efforts have led to bipartisan actions at the State Capitol to provide more stringent guidelines for any future petroleum pipeline construction, as well as providing leadership in the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Coalition. Our Sustainable Growth program is considered a go-to resource for communities across the state that are seeking a conservation-minded approach to economic growth. Through our Land Conservation Initiative, we have provided guidance and expertise to landowners across the state who are interested in seeing their land placed into permanent conservation. And on Georgia's beautiful Atlantic Coast, our Savannah-based Coastal Office is hard at work finding solutions to this region's unique conservation challenges, both on land and at sea.

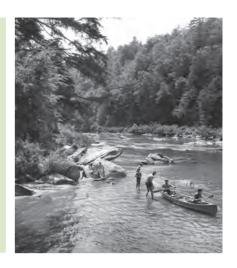
This past year, and for the five decades before, the Georgia Conservancy has helped to push the conversation around conservation, bringing diverse voices and interests together for a common cause: conserving and protecting our shared natural resources. And, with your support, we will continue to champion our natural resources into the next decade and beyond, collaborating and engaging with fellow Georgians to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Robert Ramsay, President

### **OUR PAST IS YOUR PRESENT**

#### 1960s

- The Conservancy acquires a one-year option to buy Panola Mountain for \$200,000 as the first act of preservation by the new organization
- The Georgia Conservancy advocates, first locally, then
  in Washington, for the designation of the majority of the
  Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge as federally-protected
  Wilderness. These efforts pay off in 1974, as Congress adds
  nearly 344,000 acres of the Okefenokee to the National
  Wilderness Preservation System
- The Georgia Conservancy forms a "coastal action" group to examine the best use of each of Georgia's barrier islands



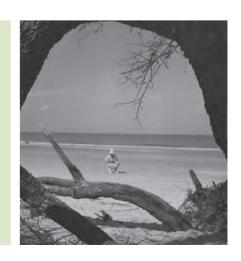


#### 1970s

- Supports the passage of the 1970 Coastal Marshlands Protection Act
- Opposes a proposal for dam building on the Alapaha River in south Georgia. The proposal is withdrawn and the dam is never built
- Persuades the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to match Georgia's \$500,000, enabling Sweetwater Creek State Park to become a reality
- Promotes the establishment of the "Smithsonian of the South" in Fernbank Forest
- Georgia Conservancy champion and charter member Jimmy Carter is elected President of the United States

#### 1980s

- Congress passes the Coastal Barrier Resources Act protecting Georgia's precious coastline by removing subsidies which promote development in high-hazard areas
- Formulates a land use plan for Jekyll Island which designates significant natural areas for conservation and environmental education
- With several other citizen groups, the Georgia Conservancy fights successfully to save the Flint River from a dam at Sprewell Bluff





#### 1990s

- Green Peaches, now Generation Green, establishes themselves as the Conservancy's organization for environmentally-aware young professionals
- Encourages the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to consider making green choices when planning activities and events for the 1996 games
- Launches "Blueprints for Successful Communities"
- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission accepts the Conservancy's Tallulah Gorge Task Force's recommendations for seasonally-based water flows for Tallulah Falls to better balance needs for hydropower, lake levels, and recreation
- GC, Urban Land Institute and the EPA host a two-day Smart Growth Conference at the Carter Center

#### 2000s

- Endorses the Georgia Water Bill of Rights, a set of nine principles that will make rivers, streams and lakes fishable and swimmable
- Persuades the 2000 General Assembly to criteria program to encourage the state's fastest growing counties to set aside 20% of their land as protected green space
- Hosts a conference on global warming
- Successfully advocates for the passage of the Georgia Land Conservation Tax Credit
- Works closely with the communities in the Westside Study Group Area participating in redevelopment planning related to the Atlanta BeltLine project





#### 2010s

- Launches its new Land Conservation Initiative (2011)
- Begins developing training curriculum around the EPA's School Siting Guidelines
- Introduces Georgia Legacy (now GOSA) legislation with partners to create a dedicated source of funding for statewide land conservation and recreation lands
- Through staunch advocacy, a bill to legalize deadhead logging on the Altamaha, Flint, Ocmulgee and Oconee is defeated
- The Stewardship Trips program hosts 30 trips across the state with 2,402 participants (2015)

### FROM 1967...

#### STATE OF GEORGIA

POPULATION: 4.4 MILLION MILES OF ROAD BUILT: 98,241 # REGISTERED CARS: 2,298,525

**RIVER BASINS: 14** 

TOTAL ACRES: 38,072,960

### ...T0 2017

#### STATE OF GEORGIA

POPULATION: 10.6 MILLION

MILES OF ROAD BUILT: 125,532

# REGISTERED CARS: 7,646,995

RIVER BASINS: 14

TOTAL ACRES: 38,072,960



As Georgia's population and economy continue to grow, so will the pressures upon our state's limited and precious natural resources.

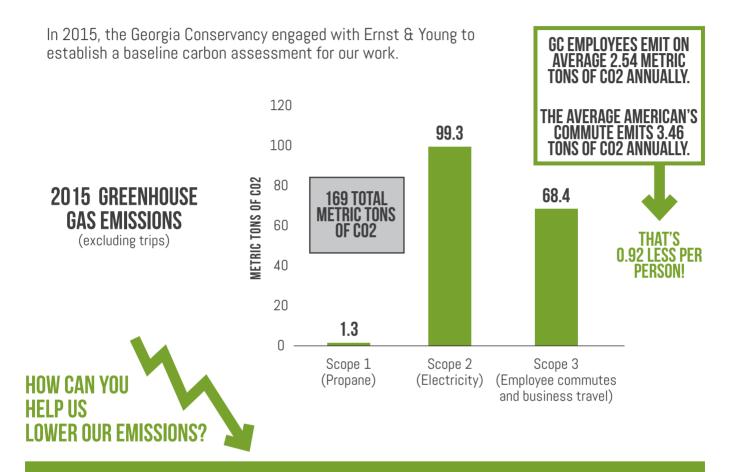
More than ever, the responsibility of the stewardship of our land and water lies with every citizen, every business and every official in Georgia.

For fifty years, the Georgia
Conservancy, our members and
our partners have dedicated our
efforts to the conservation of
Georgia's natural resources. As we
enter a new decade and face new
challenges, we will continue to
advocate for a state where people
and the environment thrive.
We hope that you will join us in this
pursuit!

pursuit

## GEORGIA CONSERVANCY'S CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

Carbon Assessment provided by Sustainbility staff at Ernst & Young



- Let us know how you traveled to any of our events, and, if possible, please carpool!
- Ask staff about carbon offsets for events and/or trips
- Ask staff about sustainability measures at our events
- Check back on our website for more information on greenhouse gas measurements and reduction possibilities





#### 570+ HOURS AT THE CAPITOL

ADVOCATED FOR PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE STATE HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE FEES - THE FIRST LICENSE FEE INCREASE SINCE 1992, AND WILL BRING IN APPROXIMATELY **\$9 MILLION EACH YEAR** FOR GEORGIA'S DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

#### **50 YEARS**

IN A JOINT RESOLUTION, THE HOUSE AND SENATE RECOGNIZED THE GEORGIA CONSERVANCY FOR 50 YEARS OF ADVOCATING FOR THE PROTECTION OF OUR STATE'S NATURAL RESOURCES. (picture at left on Georgia Conservancy Day at the Capitol)

### PASSED PETROLEUM PIPELINE LEGISLATION TO REGULATE THE SITING, PERMITTING AND CONSTRUCTION OF PETROLEUM PIPELINES IN GEORGIA.

(PRESIDENT ROBERT RAMSAY WAS APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR DEAL TO SERVE ON THE GEORGIA STATE PETROLEUM PIPELINE COMMISSION)

#### MONITORED MORE THAN **50** PIECES OF LEGISLATION

THAT COULD IMPACT GEORGIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES.

2017 BEING THE FIRST YEAR OF A TWO-YEAR SESSION, MANY OF THESE PIECES OF
LEGISLATION WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR PASSAGE IN 2018.

The Georgia Conservancy has a long history of advocating for the protection and conservation of Georgia's natural resources at the local, state and federal levels.

Our advocacy team has decades of experience in state politics and is dedicated to using the political process to help protect our state's precious natural resources. We're at the State Capitol every day of the legislative session pushing for conservation-minded bills and fighting against legislation that would roll back advancements we've already made.

The Georgia Conservancy's advocacy work doesn't stop at the Capitol steps. We're working year-round on key issues such as transportation, energy, water resources, land conservation and development to make Georgia a place where people and the environment thrive.

If you have any questions about our Advocacy Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Advocacy Director Leah Dixon at ldixon@gaconservancy.org.* 

### SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Georgia Conservancy's mission is to protect Georgia's natural resources. But in today's world, that means more than just protecting critical lands and habitats from development. It also requires that built spaces - our cities, towns and neighborhoods - grow and develop in a more sustainable fashion. Photo of Hogansville by Johanna McCre



GOOD URBANISM MORE 1,600 STUDENTS CLASSES TOTAL THAN 1,600 SINCE 2009

### ENGAGED OVER 52 COMMUNITIES IN 16 DIVERSE COUNTIES

**1**<sup>ST</sup> GC PUBLISHED POSITION PAPER ON SCHOOL SITING

5 STATEWIDE CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS
GEORGIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA FACILITY OFFICERS
CONFERENCE, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES "IS GEORGIA CLIMATE
READY?", GEORGIA CONSERVANCY'S NEXT SOUTH CONFERENCE, AND THE GEORGIA
MINING ASSOCIATION.

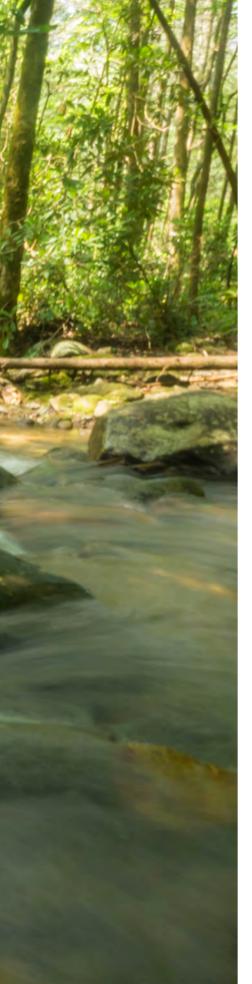
The bottom line: Better planning helps the environment, enabling communities to grow while using fewer resources and disturbing less open space.

The Georgia Conservancy's Sustainable Growth program works to foster smart, sustainable development across the state through the following initiatives:

- Blueprints for Successful Communities
- Good Urbanism
- School Siting Workshops
- Small Town Sustainability

If you have any questions about our Sustainable Growth Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Senior Director Katherine Moore at kmoore@gaconservancy.org*.





FIELDED LANDOWNER INQUIRIES FROM 23 Georgia counties

WHICH LED TO

### 20 SITE VISITS IN 10 COUNTIES

RESULTING IN

12,500 ACRES

CONSERVED BY LCI PROGRAM ANI PARTNERS IN FIVE COUNTIES

### "2 OF EVERY 3 RAINDROPS THAT FALLS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA FALLS ON A WELL-MANAGED FOREST"

- Wesley Langdale of the Georgia Forestry Commission, stated at the Georgia Conservation Summit

With the population of our state at 10 million, development is putting more pressure on our rivers and streams, and poses a threat to our biodiversity. The Georgia Conservancy believes that land conservation is a key to protecting our water resources, our plants and animals, and our citizens. It is for that reason that we have made land conservation a cornerstone of our work.

In fall of 2016, we hosted our first Georgia Conservation Summit in Macon to further cultivate a "culture of conservation" in our state. Topics included the Gopher Tortoise Initiative and the Savannah River Clean Water Fund. Our next summit will be held in 2018 - please check our website for updates.

If you have any questions about our Land Conservation Initiative or would like to learn more, please contact *Coastal Director Charles McMillan at cmcmillan@gaconservancy.org.* 

### COASTAL GEORGIA

Georgia's coast stretches for a little more than one-hundred miles and features some of the nation's most pristine beaches, remote salt marshes and protected maritime forests.





OF COASTAL RIVERS PADDLED THAT ARE A PRIORITY FOR LAND CONSERVATION

(SATILLA, ALTAMAHA, EBENEZER CREEK, AND OGEECHEE)

3 COASTAL SERVICE WEEKENDS

(TWO ON CUMBERLAND ISLAND AND ONE ON OSSABAW ISLAND)

+

HURRICANE CLEANUPS

POST-HURRICANE MATTHEW WORK ON CUMBERLAND ISLAND, FORT MCALLISTER, SKIDAWAY ISLAND STATE PARK, OSSABAW ISLAND AND UGA MARINE EXTENSION ON SKIDAWAY ISLAND)

### **CLIMATE RESILIENCY**

SPONSORED, LED SESSIONS AND FACILITATED ENGAGEMENT AT GEORGIA'S FIRST COASTAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION CONFERENCE, ORGANIZED BY GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES - COASTAL DIVISION.

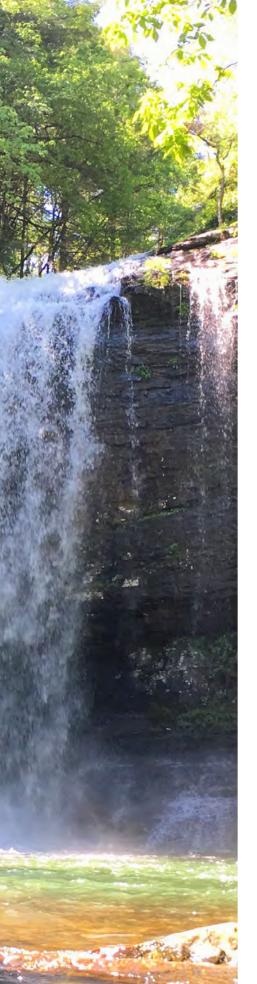
The coast of Georgia is always changing and we must be ever vigilant. From spaceports to shipping ports to oil exploration on our shoreline, we have a number of issues to research, review and advocate for environmental sustainability.

Protecting our coast has been a priority of the Georgia Conservancy for more than 40 years. We maintain an office in historic downtown Savannah, headed by Coastal Director Charles McMillan, and we are working on a range of projects to protect this precious natural resource.

If you have any questions about our Coastal Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Coastal Director Charles McMillan at cmcmillan@gaconservancy.org.* 

### STEWARDSHIP TRIPS

We are in the business of conservation, yes, but to succeed, we must also be in the business of love. Love for the rivers, the barrier islands, the marshes, the plains, the canyons and also the urban parks and the cities that surround them. We want folks breaking bread on Georgia's riverbanks or singing songs around a campfire, from the mountains through the coastal plain and to our amazing salt marshes and barrier islands.



 $305 \underset{\text{(and } 500 + \text{ scoops of Jake's ice cream!)}}{\text{Participants at our}}$ 

162 MILES OF RIVER PADDLED IN 14 DIFFERENT COUNTIES

1,879 PEOPLE TAKEN OUTSIDE 63 DAYS

170 VOLUNTEERS ON CUMBERLAND ISLAND CLEARING 40 MILES OF TRAILS, TOTALING 1,825 HOURS

Our goal is simple: Create a connection between some of Georgia's most underutilized, stunning natural places and the people we need to help us protect them. In 2017 we led trips to the Ogeechee, Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Flint, Ochlockonee, Chattahoochee, Satilla, Suwannee and Conasauga Rivers; to Ossabaw, Sapelo, Cumberland, Blackbeard, Jekyll and Little St. Simons Islands; to the Okefenokee Swamp, Cloudland Canyon, Howard's Waterfall Cave, Panola Mountain, Broxton Rocks, Radium Springs, the Len Foote Hike Inn, Augusta Canal, Ebenezer Creek, Sweetwater Creek, Spring Creek, and the mighty Cohutta Wilderness.

If you have any questions about our Stewardship Trips Program or about any upcoming trip, please contact Stewardship Trips Director Laura Buckmaster at lbuckmaster@gaconservancy.org

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to the individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations who generously supported the Georgia Conservancy and its leadership role in managing statewide environmental initiatives to protect Georgia's natural environment and resources. Due to space limitations, we are pleased to acknowledge gifts of \$250 or more from the following individuals, foundations, corporations and organizations in FYE17. We thank you for your generous support of the Conservancy's programs, projects and operations. Every effort was made to correctly list these donors from July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. If you notice an omission or error, please contact the development team at 404-876-2900 or mail@gaconservancy.org.

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General Assembly Georgia Grinders

Georgia Olive Farms

Georgia State Parks

Jake's Ice Cream

Leapfrog Services

Little Country Giants

Kristina Murray Band

Mermaid Cottages

Montane Sparkling Water

Packway Handle Band

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Pie Shop

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Sea Island Forge

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Ben Fowler, Stewardship Trips Director

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Johanna McCrehan, Urban Design Lead

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Alexis Torres, Donor Relations Director

Frmis Zavas, Director of Development

Ermis Zayas, Director of Development





### **INCOME AND EXPENSES**

Income	FYE2017	FYE2016
Contributions	\$573,205	\$405,743
Membership	\$186,432	\$160,882
Program Services	\$97,558	\$102,188
Special Events (net)	\$125,460	\$235,523
Restricted Contributions	\$402,171	\$685,991
Other Income	\$89,271	\$18,742
Total	\$1,474,097	\$1,609,069
Expenses	FYE2017	FYE2016
Outreach, Education		
and Advocacy	\$560,514	\$512,055
Sustainable Growth	\$325,093	\$345,453
Land	\$103,798	\$117,750
Coastal Program	\$134,162	\$165,359
Membership	\$121,480	\$85,373
Administration	\$172,440	\$181,861
Fundraising	\$208,501	\$200,207
Total	\$1,625,988	\$1,608,058
NET INCOME	(\$151,891)	\$1,011

Balance Sheet	
Cash and Cash Reserve	\$964,563
Endowment Fund	\$150,000
Other Assets	\$71,586
Total Assets	\$1,186,149
Total Liabilities	\$120,004
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$701,897
Temporarily Restricted Fund Balance	\$214,248
Permanently Restricted Fund Balance	\$150,000
Total Equity	\$1,186,149

The Georgia Conservancy is a private nonprofit organization. The Conservancy's revenues come from a combination of individual memberships, unrestricted gifts, restricted grants, stewardship trip fees, special events and the sale of merchandise. All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law. A certified public accounting firm audits the Georgia Conservancy annually.

If you have any questions about our Accounting or Financing, please contact Georgia Conservancy Finance Director, Cheri Robinson at crobinson@gaconservancy.org

