



STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

For Immediate Release
Friday, December 1, 2006

Contact: Office of Communications
(404) 651-7774

Governor Perdue Announces Land Conservation Grants, Loans

Bartow, DeKalb, Oconee Counties, City of Statham All Grant Winners

ATLANTA – Today Governor Sonny Perdue announced a city and four counties as recipients of Georgia Land Conservation Grants and Loans. Bartow, DeKalb and Oconee Counties and the city of Statham will receive land conservation grants. Rockdale County and the city of Statham were also approved for land conservation loans. Individual grant and loan amounts, as well as project descriptions are listed below.

“This funding represents a collaborative approach to conservation,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “I’m pleased that this initiative is encouraging Georgia cities and counties to apply for state funding to preserve local natural resources for generations to come.”

In April 2005 Governor Perdue signed into law the Georgia Land Conservation Act, an initiative to encourage the long-term conservation and protection of Georgia’s natural, cultural and historic resources. The legislation established a trust fund and a revolving loan fund of \$100 million in state, federal and private funding, available to local governments and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the purchase of conservation lands and conservation easements. The Governor's FY07 budget included an additional \$5 million for grants to local government land conservation projects.

Applications for the conservation grants and loans were reviewed collaboratively by officials from three state agencies. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ensured that grant and loan applicants met the qualifications as conservation land projects as defined in the Georgia Land Conservation Act. The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority

(GEFA) conducted the financial reviews of all applications to ensure the fiscal strength of the proposed grants and loans. The State Properties Commission handled the review and approval of all real estate due diligence associated with the projects including appraisals, surveys and environmental hazard assessments.

According to Georgia statute, conservation lands are permanently protected lands that are undeveloped and meet one or more of the goals of the Land Conservation Act. These 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, protection of prime agricultural and forestry lands, protection of cultural and historic sites, scenic protection, recreation including boating, hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting and the connection of areas contributing to these goals.

Applications for land conservation grants or loans are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Applications can be found at www.galandconservationprogram.org.

Applicant	Acres	Project Summary	Grant/Loan
Oconee County	190	A conservation easement project designed to help preserve the rapidly disappearing agricultural heritage of Oconee County. Easement will prohibit development, protect streams, and preserve forested areas. High matching funding with 70 percent of project funding coming from federal (Farm Bill), local (Oconee County), and private (discounted sale) sources. In partnership with Oconee Partnership for Farmland Protection.	\$467,000 grant
City of Statham	20.45	Acquisition will protect the area around Statham Spring which has been a primary water supply for the city of Statham since the 1930's. Mature hardwood forest. Site is adjacent to existing recreation lands and could be connected via trails. If not protected via acquisition at this time the property is likely to be sold for residential development.	\$135,000 loan \$299,000 grant
Bartow County	100	Agricultural preservation conservation easement project. Protects prime farmland and stream buffers along Sugar Hill Creek. High matching funding with local (Bartow County), federal (Farm Bill), and landowner (discounted sale) funds.	\$66,000 grant

DeKalb County	140	Acquisition of floodplain and wetlands along the South River. Primarily freshwater marsh and floodplain hardwood forest habitats. One of the largest patches of natural habitat remaining inside Atlanta's perimeter highway. Adjacent to protected Constitution Lakes property owned by DeKalb County. The county plans to construct a multi-use trail through the property as part of the South River trail system. Very high matching funding with 91 percent of project funding from other sources.	\$75,000 grant
Rockdale County	4.93	Loan application. Five acre fee acquisition with frontage on the South River. County proposes to remove old auto salvage business on property, carry out restoration, and create a trailhead for the 13-mile South River trail. Connection to Panola Mountain State Park and part of the larger Arabia Mountain Heritage area.	\$750,000 loan

###