

STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

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**Governor Perdue Announces Land Conservation Grants and
Loans**

*Funding Approved for Projects in Harris, Grady, Dougherty, Decatur
Counties and the city of Sandy Springs*

BAINBRIDGE, Ga.-Today Governor Sonny Perdue announced the approval of four Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) grants and two low-interest loans. Harris, Grady and Dougherty Counties and the city of Sandy Springs received land conservation grants. Harris and Decatur Counties received low interest land conservation loans.

“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 Harris County, property owned by the Ida Cason Callaway Foundation will be permanently protected through the purchase of a conservation easement to be held by the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). The 2,080-acre tract is located along the ridge and slopes of scenic and undeveloped Pine Mountain. An additional 150 acres will be purchased by Harris County. The property is adjacent to both a 2,507-acre tract already protected with a GFC conservation easement as well as to the 9,049-acre F.D. Roosevelt State Park, owned and managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The property contains examples of the rare montane longleaf pine ecosystem and public access and use will be accommodated.

The GLCP is contributing a \$2,000,000 grant and providing a \$2,000,000 low interest loan to Harris County. Additional funding is being provided by Harris County and through a deeply discounted sale of the easement by the landowner.

South of Albany, Georgia, in the Flint River Greenway, two tracts totaling 397 acres with one and a half miles of riverfront will be preserved. The project borders Radium Springs, which is the largest natural spring in Georgia and provides a critical freshwater resource and important cold-water habitat for fish such as the Striped Bass. It also provides habitat for rare cave-dwelling species such as the Georgia Blind Salamander.

The GLCP is contributing a \$721,000 grant. Funding partners include Dougherty County and the Georgia Wetlands Trust Fund.

A wildflower site along Wolf Creek in Grady County in the southwest corner of Georgia, will be acquired and permanently protected. The 140-acre tract is known for having one of the largest and most dense populations of trout lilies (a species typically found in mountainous North Georgia) and is home to several other wildflowers of special concern. The property will be owned by Grady County and managed through a partnership of organizations to provide environmental education programs.

The GLCP is contributing a \$342,000 grant. Matching funds are being provided by a variety of private conservation organizations and a discounted sale of the property by the landowner.

In the city of Sandy Springs and in the heart of metro Atlanta, an undeveloped property with a forest more than 100 years old will be preserved. The same family has owned the 24-acre property since the early 1900's. The land will now be protected in perpetuity. The property consists of a mature pine and mixed hardwood forest and contains a clear creek that feeds into the nearby Chattahoochee River. The city will eventually use the site as a passive educational and recreational park.

The GLCP is contributing a \$250,000 grant. Other funds and project support are being provided by the city of Sandy Springs, The Trust for Public Land, and other private conservation organizations as well as a deeply discounted sale of the property by the landowner.

Decatur County is being awarded a \$3,000,000 low interest loan to help complete phase two of the new Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area project which protects 8,430 acres of native longleaf pine forest and wetlands located along Lake Seminole and the Flint River in southwest Georgia. The tract contains abundant wildlife, 19 active groups of federally threatened red cockaded woodpeckers and other rare species. The state acquired approximately 3,900 acres of the property during phase one of the project in December 2007. During phase two of the project, the state plans to acquire another portion of the property. Funding partners for phase two include Decatur County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation.

About the 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. GLCP also provides low-interest loans for fee title or conservation easement purchases from the Georgia Land Conservation Revolving Fund. Tax incentives are available for donations or discounted sales of conservation lands or conservation easements. Since the program's inception, 49 projects totaling 64,005 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, cultural and historic sites, areas of scenic importance, recreational areas (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 during the 2004 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 can be found at www.glcp.org.

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