



STATE OF GEORGIA

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**Sonny Perdue**  
**GOVERNOR**

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Contact: Office of Communications, (404) 651-7774  
Shane Hix, GEFA, (404) 584-1043  
Lauren Curry, DNR, (404) 656-6546

**Georgia Land Conservation Program Protects Ancient Forest  
Along Altamaha River**

*Project Completed in Long and McIntosh Counties*

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today the completion of a new Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) project in Long and McIntosh counties that will protect several miles of land adjacent to the Altamaha River, an ancient forest containing champion trees, and rare and endangered species.

“Permanently preserving tracts of land of this significance is integral to creating a culture of conservation in Georgia,” said Governor Perdue. “And this is an excellent example of the state partnering with the private sector, conservation community and the federal government to make that happen.”

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will own and manage the 7,180-acre acquisition from Rayonier Forest Resources; the state already owns a 300-foot buffer on the river as part of a donation from Rayonier in 1978. The land will be maintained as a conservation area and become part of the Townsend Wildlife Management Area. Primary funding partners include the GLCP, The Nature Conservancy, Open Space Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Thanks to the continued foresight of Rayonier in protecting environmentally sensitive lands, one of the largest remaining intact tracts of land in the lower Altamaha River will be permanently protected,” said Shelly Lakly, director of The Nature Conservancy in Georgia. “Having now helped to protect more than 89,000 acres along the Altamaha, the Conservancy is grateful to our partners and supporters for their commitment to conservation- this is a unique example of how public and private dollars can be leveraged.”

Stretching 10 miles along the Altamaha River, this property contains several large specimen trees including the largest cypress tree in Georgia and surrounding states, with a circumference of 43 feet 3 inches. The property also contains a variety of habitats including freshwater wetlands, tupelo swamps, intertidal and longleaf pine forests. It supports at least 17 state-listed rare and endangered species such as the swallow-tailed kite, gopher tortoise and the federally protected eastern indigo snake.

The GLCP is managed by the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA). The program works with public and private sector partners to permanently protect lands with high conservation value. Since the program's inception, the GLCP has completed 169 projects for a total of 116,627 acres.

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

For more information on the GLCP, please visit [www.glcp.ga.gov](http://www.glcp.ga.gov).

#### ***About the Georgia Land Conservation Program***

*The Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) works to preserve a statewide network of land and water resources for current and future generations to use and enjoy. The GLCP promotes partnerships between cities and counties in Georgia, state and federal agencies, landowners, and other private sector partners to protect the state's valuable natural resources. The GLCP provides a flexible framework and land conservation funding options including grants, low interest loans, and tax incentives which augment local, state, and federal funding sources to achieve the permanent conservation of land through the acquisition of conservation easements and fee simple ownership.*

#### ***About Conserve Georgia***

*The Conserve Georgia program was developed to foster a culture of conservation throughout the state of Georgia. Nearly a dozen state agencies and authorities are working together with businesses, civic leaders, educational institutions, non-profit organizations and residents to make Georgia's land, water and energy resources more sustainable now and for generations to come. The program's Web site – [www.conservegeorgia.org](http://www.conservegeorgia.org) – serves as a portal to help Georgians find information on a wide range of conservation resources and programs.*

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