



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

**Land Conservation Program Tops 100,000 Acres**

*State and Private Investment Conserves Land in 71 Counties Across Georgia*

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today an important milestone for land conservation in Georgia. The Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) has surpassed 100,000 acres of preserved land since its inception in 2005.

“Thanks to the state’s efforts and to contributions by landowners and other partners, valuable conservation lands and historic sites are conserved for future generations to use and enjoy,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “As Georgians we are blessed to live in a state that is rich with natural beauty and we will continue to be good stewards of the land.”

The GLCP accomplished the 100,000-acre mark with an investment of \$66 million in state dollars that leveraged more than \$175 million in non-state grants and donations, a ratio of better than two-to-one.

“The GLCP, partnering with organizations and landowners dedicated to land conservation, has worked hard to reach the 100,000-acre milestone,” said GEFA Executive Director Chris Clark. “We look forward to the continued success of this program and to preserving more and more of our state’s natural resources.”

The most recent property protected through the GLCP, and the project responsible for the program reaching the 100,000-acre mark, is the Jim L. Gillis Forest Legacy Easement. The easement covers 1,453 acres of working forest, waterways and farmland in Treutlen and Laurens Counties and was donated to the state through the Georgia Forestry Commission’s Forest Legacy Program. The property contains pristine and ecologically sensitive resources, including Anderson Pond, Pendleton Creek and longleaf pine stands, which will be permanently protected

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by the conservation easement. The conservation easement also ensures that the Gillis family, and any future owners of the property, will be able to continue harvesting forest and agricultural crops in perpetuity.

“Mr. Jim L. Gillis is a true icon of Georgia forestry,” said Robert Farris, director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. “It is especially fitting that he is the landowner to take us to this outstanding milestone.”

Through direct land purchases, conservation easements and tax incentives, the GLCP has completed 133 projects in 71 counties resulting in the permanent protection of 100,344 acres of Georgia’s most important natural lands and historic sites. Fifty-four state-funded projects have conserved 69,664 acres and 79 tax credit projects have conserved 30,680 acres.

The following are some of the GLCP projects completed in 2008 and included in the 100,000 acres of conserved land.

#### Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area

The new Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA) opened to the public in August of 2008. This WMA protects 8,430 acres of native longleaf pine forest and wetlands located along Lake Seminole and the Flint River in southwest Georgia. The property also supports the federally threatened red cockaded woodpecker and provides valuable habitat for gopher tortoise, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, waterfowl and the declining northern bobwhite quail. This land is now open for all Georgians to hike, fish, hunt, bird-watch and picnic on the shores of Lake Seminole. In addition to the GLCP, primary funding partners include Decatur County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation.

#### McLemore Cove

In Walker County, one of the most beautiful sites in Georgia will be preserved through the GLCP. McLemore Cove will be permanently protected through the purchase of 1,565 acres by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and 295 acres by Walker County as well as a conservation easement covering an additional 740 acres. Funding and cooperation by GLCP, Walker County and the Open Space Conservancy, Inc. all contributed toward this preservation of greenspace, historic values, and scenic beauty in the northwest corner of the state.

#### Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area

In Paulding County on the edge of metro Atlanta 6,865 acres were permanently protected as part of the Paulding Forest WMA. Bisected by the popular and heavily used Silver Comet Trail, this

large tract also contains thriving populations of the rare Etowah and Cherokee darters in pristine Raccoon Creek. Primary funding partners for this project include Paulding County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation in addition to the GLCP.

### Pine Mountain

In Harris County, the backbone of scenic Pine Mountain is being protected through the purchase of a conservation easement covering 2,131 acres by the Georgia Forestry Commission using GLCP grant and loan funds. An additional 150 acres is being purchased by Harris County. Located adjacent to Georgia's largest state park (FDR State Park), this project helps create a large continuous conservation area covering the ridges and slopes of Pine Mountain. The protection of this property also conserves an important example of the very rare montane longleaf pine ecosystem.

### North Marsh

Along Georgia's coast in Glynn County on St. Simons Island, a tract of coastal marsh and upland was acquired to prevent development and maintain the scenic and historic qualities of the adjacent Fort Frederica National Monument, one of the earliest English settlements in Georgia. The 21-acre property includes an undeveloped Native American shell midden dating to 1,000 B.C., salt marsh, maritime forest, and habitat for wood storks, diamondback terrapins and bald eagles. Glynn County used a GLCP grant and low-interest loan to acquire the property.

### The Lost Corner Preserve

In metro Atlanta's Sandy Springs, Georgia, a new city park has been established covering 24 undeveloped acres. Owned and preserved by the same family for more than 100 years, the tract contains a mature loblolly pine and mixed hardwood forest with a large number of trees greater than 100 years in age as well as springs and a creek that feeds into the nearby Chattahoochee River. In addition to support from the GLCP, this project benefitted from a contribution from the city and a greatly discounted sale of the property from the owners.

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

*The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) provides financial assistance and administers programs that encourage stewardship of the environment and promote economic development statewide. GEFA is the lead state agency for energy planning and alternative fuels; manages Conserve Georgia, the Governor's Energy Challenge and the Georgia Land Conservation Program; maintains state-owned fuel storage tanks; and offers financing for reservoir and water supply, water quality, storm water and solid waste infrastructure.*