

THIS IS YOUR GEORGIA

LATE FALL 2021

www.GeorgiaConservancy.org



Downtown Sandersville, Ga by Julian Buckmaster

Mayors' Clinics for Sustainable Design

The Mayors' Clinics for Sustainable Design, Georgia Conservancy's in-depth training program for mayors, offers tailored problem-solving, education, and hands-on technical services for visionary elected officials responsible for the betterment of their communities.

The 2022 cohort of Mayors' Clinics will focus specifically on engaging female and minority mayors in Georgia.

This opportunity for Georgia's elected officials comes at just the right time: our state is projected to add 3.5 million people by the year 2050. But that figure masks the more nuanced truth that each one of Georgia's communities will face its own challenges based on location, size, existing assets, and hundreds of other factors.

Georgia's numerous small towns (80% of municipalities are comprised of 5k people or less) face pronounced challenges related to competitiveness, longevity, and sustainability. The Mayors' Clinics aim to address these issues with those who know their community best. Local elected leadership is key to ensuring that individual communities and Georgia at large are successful, vibrant, and sustainable—25 years from now and beyond.

Mayors who participate in the program will receive general education on good, sustainable community design. Each Mayor will also be asked to submit a challenge from their community that will be discussed with their entire cohort. Through this peer-to-peer exchange, not only do mayors receive direct technical assistance and innovation, but they also cultivate a sense of community among each other.

The Mayors' Clinics have been generously supported by UPS Foundation, Georgia Power, Colonial Pipeline, Troutman Pepper, and individuals like you!

Learn more about the Mayors' Clinics and how you can support at www.georgiaconservancy.org/mayors-clinics



THIS IS YOUR GEORGIA The President's Letter

What a pleasure it was to return to our annual in-person *ecoBenefête* gala this November. The opportunity to see familiar faces and greet new supporters was something we've truly missed during these many long months.

Thank you to all who sponsored and supported this wonderful evening *ecoBenefête* was also an important opportunity to again celebrate champions of Georgia's environment and to share with others the impactful work that the Georgia Conservancy continues to perform in support of our state's natural resources and communities.

We hope that you learn more about these efforts in this issue of *This Is My Georgia* and continue to support our mission into the New Year and beyond. Thank you!

Katherine Moore, President
Georgia Conservancy

ECOBENEFETE 2021 - COURAGE IN CONSERVATION

Honoring Shirley Clarke Franklin as our Distinguished Conservationist



GC Board Chair Dr. Mark Berry, the Honorable Shirley Clarke Franklin, and GC President Katherine Moore

On Thursday, November 4th, Georgia Conservancy held its 27th annual *ecoBenefête* gala, honoring former City of Atlanta Mayor Shirley Clarke Franklin with our prestigious Distinguished Conservationist Award. The evening brought together supporters of the Georgia Conservancy's work to celebrate and reflect on Mayor Franklin's legacy as a strong, practical, and tenacious advocate for clean water, natural resource preservation, and community-centered development.

The theme of the evening—"Courage in Conservation"—rang true through Mayor Franklin's words, as well as through those of Yeou-Rong Jih of the Kresge Foundation, who was presented with the Longleaf Award by Georgia Conservancy's young professionals' board, Generation Green, in recognition of her tireless work to forward and enhance sustainability and conservation in the City of Atlanta. The Longleaf Award annually celebrates an emerging environmental leader in metro Atlanta.

"It's time to move beyond traditional conservation work, as important as that is," said Yeou-Rong Jih. "In all that we do, we must ensure the environmental movement and climate change movement are built on racial and economic equity."

In her acceptance remarks, Mayor Franklin reflected on the importance of empowering local leaders to embrace the challenges of working towards economic and environmental sustainability and resilience. She took the opportunity to laud several colleagues that helped her set a long-term vision for the city's infrastructural future, crediting the team around her for working together to champion marquee green projects like Westside Park and the Atlanta BeltLine.

She issued a call to her fellow mayors and elected leaders in Georgia to "have the vision for what comes 25 years after you, and to have the courage to build the foundation for a place you will not see in your lifetimes."

The Georgia Conservancy would like to thank our *ecoBenefête* sponsors Georgia Power, Cox Enterprises, Waste Management, Novelis, Georgia-Pacific, KIA Georgia, Koch Industries, Southwire, Federal Home Loan Bank Atlanta, Home Depot Foundation, and Leapfrog Services.

To learn more about ecoBenefête and the evening's award recipients, please visit: www.georgiaconservancy.org/ecobenefete

UPDATES ON STATEWIDE EFFORTS

Film Explores Okefenokee and Threat of Mining

The Georgia Conservancy and our partners in the Okefenokee Protection Alliance (OPA) continue to express serious concerns regarding the proposed heavy mineral mining project near the Okefenokee.

A new short film from OPA, *Sacred Waters: The Okefenokee in Peril* explores this threat as it takes viewers into the heart of the Swamp, showcasing its mystical natural beauty, cultural importance, and incredible ecological value.

View at www.gaconservancy.org/okefenokee/mining

Save The Date! The Oyster Roast is Back!

The Oyster Roast is back! After a pandemic-canceled 2021 event, our annual Oyster Roast returns to Grove Point in Savannah as a celebration of all-things coast!

The Oyster Roast has all-you-can-enjoy local oysters and clams, Sweetwater Brewing Company beer, live local music, and so much more! Tickets go on-sale in early January.

Learn more at www.gaconservancy.org/oysterroast



Shucking away at the Oyster Roast

The 2022 Legislative Session is Approaching

We are at the State Capitol every day of the Legislative Session working to advance pro-conservation measures and fight against any roll-backs to our state's current environmental protections.

The 2022 Legislative Session kicks-off in early January. Stay up-to-date on important bills with our weekly Legislative Update!

Sign up at www.gaconservancy.org/advocacy/update

GEORGIA SENTINEL LANDSCAPE

Efforts to improve Longleaf Pine habitat

The Georgia Conservancy and partners are expanding prescribed fire efforts in an 11-county focus area to improve longleaf pine ecosystem management.

Funded through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, this outreach and education effort was developed in conjunction with the Georgia Sentinel Landscape (GSL), a partnership consisting of the USDA, US Department of the Interior, US Department of Defense, the Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, The Georgia Conservancy, The Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, and over a dozen other partners.

GSL is one of seven designated Sentinel Landscapes in the nation. Sentinel Landscapes are working, or natural lands important to the National Defense mission, places where preserving the working and rural character of key landscapes strengthens the economies of farms, ranches, and forests, as well as protects the military mission.

This effort is a portion of the Georgia Sentinel Landscape project, which collectively invests almost \$4.3 million to complement Department of Defense Sentinel Landscape activities in Georgia and support Georgia's Gopher Tortoise Initiative goals.

The 11-county focus area for prescribed fire and firebreak-related practices for this land management funding include Camden, Chattahoochee, Evans, Long, Macon, Marion, McIntosh, Schley, Talbot, Tattnall, and Taylor counties.

Eligible landowners in these Georgia counties who been selected will have the opportunity to improve potential and existing Gopher Tortoise habitat through land management contracts involving conservation practices like prescribed burn and firebreaks.

Learn more about Georgia Sentinel Landscape partnership: www.gaconservancy.org/land/gsl

WOMEN'S HIKING GROUP EXPLORES GEORGIA

Inaugural year for Refugee Women's Network hikers is a success!



Summitting Pine Mountain in Bartow County by Ileana Yustis

In an effort to introduce some of Georgia's newest residents to the state's most precious natural areas and outdoor recreation destinations, Georgia Conservancy partnered with Refugee Women's Network (RWN) on a brand new women's hiking program in 2021.

RWN is a Decatur-based non-profit that serves refugee women resettled in Georgia by inspiring and equipping them with the resources to become leaders in their homes, businesses, and communities.

The new Women's Hiking Group promotes physical and mental health, community integration, and environmental stewardship for a group of women survivors of war, conflict, and displacement.

Thirty women representing fifteen countries participated in eight monthly outings in locations as diverse as Cascade Springs Nature Preserve and Tallulah Gorge State Park. The women hiked 21.6 miles and climbed 3193 feet during the inaugural year.

The Women's Hiking Group will welcome new adventurers as they continue their exploration of Georgia with us in 2022!

Learn more at www.georgiaconservancy.org/womens-hiking-group

WINTER 2022 TRIPS!

Explore Georgia this New Year on a Stewardship Trip

Whether on the coast or in the mountains, join us as we kick-off 2022 with a number of Georgia Conservancy Stewardship Trips!

And don't forget to check our calendar as we add more service and educational opportunities!

Ossabaw Island Service Weekend
(January 7-9)

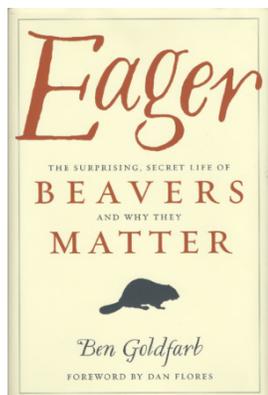
Little St. Simons Island Cambium Weekend
(January 27-30)

Cabretta Beach Adventure
(February 4-6)

Cloudland Canyon Adventure
(March 11-13) *Rescheduled*



Learn more and register today at www.gaconservancy.org/calendar



GREEN READS BOOK CLUB

Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter by Ben Goldfarb is our Green Reads Book Club selection for January 19, 2022. From Chelsea Green Publishing: "*Eager* is a powerful story about one of the world's most influential species, how North America was colonized, how our landscapes have changed over the centuries, and how beavers can help us fight drought, flooding, wildfire, extinction, and the ravages of climate change.

Interested in joining the conversation? Learn more at www.gaconservancy.org/green-reads/january or email greenreadsbookclub@yahoo.com for more information.

Atlanta Office:
230 Peachtree Street NW - Suite 2275
Atlanta, GA 30303
P: 404.876.2900



Coastal Office:
428 Bull Street - Suite 210
Savannah, GA 31401
P: 912.447.5910

georgiaconservancy.org