

THIS IS YOUR GEORGIA

SUMMER 2021

www.GeorgiaConservancy.org



Cumberland Island National Seashore by GC member Milton Bell

Final EIS Issued for Spaceport Camden

On June 17, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released the long-awaited final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Spaceport Camden site launch license. It is expected that the FAA will issue its Record of Decision (ROD) in late July.

Upon initial review, the FAA EIS is generally favorable towards approval of this project and puts off for later consideration the potential impacts to Cumberland Island, Little Cumberland Island, the surrounding salt marsh, and the Intracoastal waterway. Additionally, it does not adequately address our concerns about this project and the process through which it has been considered.

The delay in the issuance of the EIS and ROD was in part due to a January 2020 application revision submitted by Camden County seeking to change Spaceport Camden from a medium-lift rocket facility to one that launches small-lift rockets. The public was not given the opportunity by the FAA to comment on these proposed changes.

While there is no formal comment period for a final EIS, the Georgia Conservancy continues to express our numerous concerns to state, local and federal officials.

Read the EIS and our latest updates at gaconservancy.org/spaceport

OUR CONCERNS INCLUDE:

Impacts that catastrophic events and launch disasters may have upon the ecological integrity of nearby ecosystems, including Cumberland Island National Seashore and Wilderness Area.

Compliance of this project with the Georgia Coastal Marshland Protection Act.

Disruptions of use of the waterways during and before launches, including parts of St. Andrews Sound and the Intracoastal Waterway.

Limiting the use of public property (Cumberland Island National Seashore) and private property (Little Cumberland Island) during and before launches.



THIS IS YOUR GEORGIA The President's Letter

With summer comes new opportunities for the Georgia Conservancy and our members to engage on issues important to our natural resources and communities - and this year, the ability to do much of that in-person!

Thanks to your support, this year we will be assisting two metro-Atlanta communities as they plan for the future, continuing our efforts to protect the Okefenokee Swamp from nearby mining, kick-starting the second-half of our Stewardship Trips calendar with some exciting weekend adventures, and much more.

And through these new opportunities, we remain inspired by the tremendous legacy left by our former Board Chair, Clay Long.

Enjoy this issue of *This Is Your Georgia!*

Katherine Moore, President
Georgia Conservancy

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Georgia Carbon Sequestration Registry modernized



Principled advocacy relies upon sound data and inclusive collaboration. With this in mind, the Georgia Conservancy's Advocacy team is under the Gold Dome every day of the Legislative Session working with partners in advocating for the protection of Georgia's land, water, and communities.

Before the 2021 session began, we made the passage of a number of measures a priority for Georgia, including amending Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program allocations in the FY21 budget and establishing requirements for dedicated fees. Bills that successfully addressed these priorities passed the General Assembly and were signed by the Governor.

Another successful measure with strong support from the Georgia Conservancy was House Bill 355. The bill modernized Georgia's Carbon Sequestration Registry, enabling the creation and tracking of carbon credits that can be accrued and then sold by developers to companies looking to offset their carbon footprint.

The updated registry includes carbon credits for the use of sustainable building products, such as CO2-infused concrete, mass timber, carbon-neutral flooring, and all wood products, in statewide construction projects. Housed at the State Forestry Commission, the registry will allow for the verification of structures by an independent third-party so as to determine the number of credits issued to the developer. Participation in the registry would be voluntary.

The bill also created a Sustainable Building Material Carbon Sequestration Technical Advisory Committee to set baselines for a building material registry and to verify potential vendors.

Other priority legislation of the Georgia Conservancy, such as the re-authorization of the Georgia Land Conservation Tax Credit, was introduced during the session and did not pass. Fortunately, these measures will move forward into the 2022 Legislative Session for consideration. In the interim, we are working with legislators and partners to ensure their success next spring.

Please read a full update on the 2021 Legislative Session at www.georgiaconservancy.org/advocacy/update and don't forget to sign-up for our 2022 Legislative Update emails.

UPDATES ON STATEWIDE EFFORTS

Proposed Mining Near the Okefenokee

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.

Though the vast majority of the 438,000-acre Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is strategically preserved as a Federal wilderness area, mining interests just beyond its boundaries could permanently alter the Swamp. www.gaconservancy.org/okefenokee/mining

Refugee Women's Network Hiking Group

We're exploring trails and climbing mountains! In an effort to showcase Georgia to our state's newest residents, the Georgia Conservancy and Refugee Women's Network (RWN) have partnered through RWN's newest program, the Women's Hiking Group. So far this year, the twenty-plus women have shared in adventures at Sweetwater Creek State Park, Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, Cascade Springs Nature Preserve, and Kennesaw Mountain. www.gaconservancy.org/womens-hiking-group



Davidson-Arabia Mountain hike by Ileana Yustis

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Grants

The pre-application window for the 2021/22 Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) funding cycle begins on August 2.

GOSP, created in 2018 through the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act and voter-approved Amendment 1, awards Conserve Georgia Grants for the purpose of the stewardship of state lands and parks, conservation of critical habitat, and support for local parks and trails. www.gadnr.org/gosp

REMEMBERING CLAY LONG

Former Georgia Conservancy Board Chair

The Georgia Conservancy is tremendously saddened by the May 29th passing of Clay Long, Atlanta attorney and founding partner and former co-chairman at McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP.

Clay Long, a supporter of the Georgia Conservancy for decades, was currently serving on the organization's Advisory Council. He served as Board Chair from 1994-1996. During this tenure, he oversaw the development of the Georgia Conservancy's *Blueprints for Successful Communities* program, now in its 31st year of providing conservation-focused planning services to communities across Georgia.

As an avid conservationist and supporter of smart growth strategies, Clay Long served on statewide councils focused on natural resources protection, including the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership and Georgia Greenspace Commission. Additionally, Clay Long and his family's generous philanthropic support for conservation continues to be of lasting benefit to Georgia and beyond.

In recognition of his lifelong dedication to conservation, Clay Long was honored as our 2005 Distinguished Conservationist.

Georgia Conservancy staff, Board of Trustees, and Advisory Council extend our heartfelt condolences to Clay Long's family, friends and colleagues.

In the hopes of forwarding Clay Long's conservation legacy, the family requests that any tributes in his honor be made to The Clay Long Fund at the Georgia Conservancy.

[Learn more at www.gaconservancy.org/clay-long](http://www.gaconservancy.org/clay-long)



Clay Long by AJC

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE IN METRO ATLANTA

Georgia Conservancy assists Lithia Springs & Locust Grove



The Georgia Conservancy is excited to continue our partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) through their Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP). This year, we will be assisting two growing metro Atlanta communities - Lithia Springs and Locust Grove.

Utilizing curriculum from ARC's Community Planning Academy and our Good Urbanism 101 workshops, the Georgia Conservancy will work with Douglas County citizens and officials to develop the tools and resources necessary to ensure that the historic character of Lithia Springs is maintained and celebrated while the area experiences continued growth.

In Henry County's Locust Grove, the Georgia Conservancy will partner with the Incremental Development Alliance to audit the city's zoning code and help identify new standards for social equity and resiliency in the community's zoning ordinance update.

Learn more at www.georgiaconservancy.org/growth/cdap

TRIPS ARE BACK!

Explore Georgia this summer on a Stewardship Trip!

After a long-hiatus, the Georgia Conservancy's Stewardship Trips program has returned to Georgia's trails and waterways, and this summer we are excited to offer a number of educational adventures.

Conasauga River Day Snorkel
(July 31 & Aug. 1) *Members-only*

Sapelo Island Service Weekend
(Aug. 13-15)

Lower Flint River Paddle
(Aug. 27-29)

Cloudland Canyon Adventure
(Sept. 17-19)

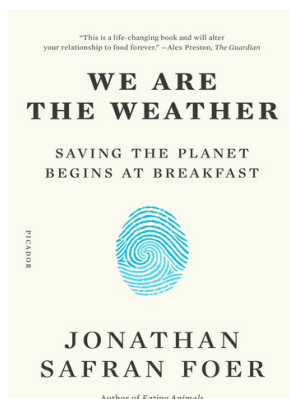


Learn more and register today at www.gaconservancy.org/calendar

GREEN READS BOOK CLUB

Jonathan Safran Foer's book *We Are The Weather* is our Green Reads selection for August 18. From MacMillan Publishers: "*In 'We Are the Weather', Jonathan Safran Foer explores the central global dilemma of our time in a surprising, deeply personal, and urgent new way... We have, he reveals, turned our planet into a farm for growing animal products, and the consequences are catastrophic. Only collective action will save our home and way of life. And it all starts with what we eat—and don't eat—for breakfast.*"

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



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