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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Georgia DNR Announces 19 Grants Through the Recreational Trails Program** *\$2.5 million in competitive grants awarded for trails in Georgia*

ATLANTA, Ga. (February 15, 2024) – The Georgia Department of Natural Resources today announced the selection of the Georgia Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants for construction and rehabilitation of trails. Selected applicants will be invited to submit final applications for their proposals, which will result in more than \$4.6 million of funding to support outdoor access across the state. Grantees will partner with private and public organizations, leveraging the RTP funding into a total estimated investment of almost \$8.6 million for trail projects.

“With this grant funding, we’re investing in the future of outdoor recreation in Georgia,” said Walter Rabon, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. “These trail projects will not only enhance outdoor accessibility, but will also create opportunities that promote health, recreation, and economic vitality for all Georgians across our state.”

The Recreational Trails Program seeks to support communities in developing recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized outdoor recreation. RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent an estimate of the motor fuel excise tax collected from off-highway recreational fuel use.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources conducts biannual grant application cycles for RTP funds. The 19 awardees were selected from 35 project proposals requesting \$5.6 million.

The complete list of Georgia Recreational Trails Program awards is below. For more information about RTP and these grants, visit [www.gadnr.org/rtp](http://www.gadnr.org/rtp).

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#### **2023-2024 Georgia Recreational Trails Program Selected Projects**

**Camden County Board of Commissions - St. Marys River Overlook Trail at Browntown Wilderness Park**

The trail is located along the St. Marys River, providing visitors with a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant ecosystems and natural beauty of the region. The project will replace 615 feet of the existing boardwalk trail with new materials, ensuring the trail remains safe and sustainable for years to come. Additionally, an 850-foot nature trail will be installed, offering an immersive experience in the heart of nature. This expansion allows for a deeper connection with the environment and an opportunity to explore local wildlife and vegetation up close.

### **Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission - Chicopee Woods Trail Restoration and Reconstruction Project**

Chicopee Woods is home to Chicopee Lake, an area that was originally constructed for two purposes, to support K-12 educational programs and to provide community access to the lake wetland area. Frequent flooding has led to the deterioration of the dock, rotting the wooden boards, warping hardware, and causing slip hazards from algae and silt along the walkways. The project includes redeveloping the deteriorated 2.7-mile Coyote Loop Mountain Bike Trail and repairing poorly designed sections of other existing mountain bike trails.

### **City of Cartersville - Pine Mountain Recreation Area Trail**

Pine Mountain Recreation Area is 225 acres of greenspace featuring approximately 4.72 miles of hiking and biking trails. The City of Cartersville will add trail-related facilities improvements to the Pine Mountain Recreation Area trailheads.

### **City of Cedartown - Goodyear Trail**

The Goodyear Trail project will connect an existing bridge over Cedar Creek to the west side of the park and provide access for nearby neighborhoods. In addition to the bridge connectivity over the Creek, portions of the trail will be constructed on top of a natural levy to allow residents access to vantage points of the trail system.

### **City of Chattahoochee Hills - Wheel Beautiful: RiverLands Scenic Universal Access Trail**

The City of Chattahoochee Hills has 1,200 acres of preserved parkland with 22 miles of trails. The project will add compliance to an existing trail system to meet the ADA and ABA guidelines. The Wheel Beautiful: RiverLands Scenic Universal Access Trail will invite all residents and visitors to experience nature, including woodlands, meadows, views of the Chattahoochee River, and pollinator meadows featuring native wildflowers.

### **City of Eatonton - Briar Patch Trail Park**

The project will complete the second phase of construction which includes 0.5 miles of new pervious asphalt and a challenging crusher run trail for those interested in a more difficult trek. The second phase will consist of the design and planning of several supplementary features to draw visitors of all levels of fitness and ability to enjoy the path.

### **City of Marietta - East Dixie Trail**

The East Dixie Trail is a connection between existing multi-use trails in the city. Currently the Mountain to River (M2R) trail starts at Kennesaw Mountain National Park then travels south passing through the City of Marietta and connecting to the Silver Comet Trail Spur in the City of Smyrna on Atlanta Rd. and Concord Rd. The project consists of an 8' wide concrete multi-use

path that will serve as a connection between the M2R Trail, the Cobb Linc Transfer Center, and the Rottenwood Creek Trail.

#### **City of Smyrna - Chattahoochee RiverLands Recreational Trail**

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has partnered with the City of Smyrna to overhaul the gravel trail that has collapsed from erosion to transect the City's Riverview Park. TPL will upgrade the untenable gravel path into a wider, concrete trail fit for greater usage, more universal accessibility, and worthy of connecting both up and downstream into the 2.7-mile-long RiverLands Showcase project. In addition, the project includes replacing the existing trailhead and kayak launch in the park. This will serve as a key connection within the larger 2.7-mile RiverLands Showcase project connecting Riverview Landing, through Riverview Park, under Veterans Memorial Highway, to Mableton Parkway in nearby Mableton.

#### **City of Watkinsville - Thomas Farm Trail**

The City of Watkinsville's project will construct a 2-mile ADA-accessible trail (5'-10' wide) on a 100-acre property acquired by the City. The proposed 2-mile trail will enhance outdoor access and recreation by providing the public access to Calls Creek which runs along the northern border of the property and flows into the Oconee River.

#### **City of WestPoint - Connecting People to Chattahoochee: Master Plan Implementation of Woodyard Trail Park**

The City of West Point aims to connect its visitors to the different parts of the Chattahoochee River. The project maximizes the water trail infrastructure by incorporating signage on the site to improve access to an existing water trail on the Chattahoochee River. The project will include a 0.3-mile ADA-accessible concrete trail called the Woodyard Trail, creating a "riverwalk," on the banks of the Chattahoochee River in West Point, GA. The improvements will provide an observation area along the banks of the river, to include three wildlife viewing platforms out of the way of pedestrian traffic on the trail.

#### **Clayton County Parks and Recreation - Rivers Edge Trail Extension Phase 3 and 4**

The Phase 3 and 4 expansions of the Rivers Edge Greenway trail system represent a significant stride in enhancing outdoor access and recreational opportunities within Clayton County. These pivotal phases are poised to substantially enrich the trail network within the Parks and Recreation Department's largest greenspace, Rivers Edge. The project will add approximately 8,000 linear feet of meticulously designed and paved trail, for Phases 3 and 4 to increase the total trail length to 3 miles.

#### **Columbus Consolidated Government - Fall Line Trace Trail Improvements**

The proposed project is an enhancement plan for the Fall Line Trace trail to bring it up to current standards from a signage and amenities perspective. This project aims to rehabilitate existing signage, add new signage, and improve trailhead facilities that meet the demand of the 170,000+ annual trail users on the Fall Line Trace. These improvements are long overdue and have the support of the community and elected officials

#### **Jones County - Clinton Tanyard Trail**

This project consists of the construction of a new trail system on the 16-acre Old Clinton Historical Society property located in Jones County. The trail system will include a 5' wide gravel nature trail (1,300 linear ft) and an 8' wide exercise loop trail (4,070 linear ft) as well as three wooden footbridges that traverse creek and gully areas. The project also includes a new parking lot to support the increased usage of the area and an open-air picnic shelter to support the use of the trail.

#### **Moultrie-Colquitt County - Tom White Linear Park Rehabilitation**

The Tom White Linear Park Rehabilitation project includes general maintenance to both the asphalt trail and gravel trail. Other repairs will include updates to existing signage, trash bins, and landscapes that have deteriorated over time. The project also includes adding benches and water fountains to the park. The work to be performed will correct eroded portions of the gravel trail, gravel infill, and other prevention strategies to avoid future erosion.

#### **Oconee River Greenway Authority - Fishing Creek Trail Extension-Downtown Connector**

The project consists of paving the final section of the trail to provide visitors access to Oconee River Greenway Park, which is on a river where people swim, boat, and kayak. Georgia Military College and its students will have access to downtown jobs and educational opportunities. Baldwin County is considered a Historically Disadvantaged Community and is an Area of Persistent Poverty; this trail enhancement will increase recreation opportunities for visitors and the community.

#### **Oglethorpe County - Maxey's Firefly Trail South**

This project will complete the final portions of the Firefly Trail within the city limits of Maxeys. The Firefly Trail will extend from Union Point in Greene County to Athens in Clarke County, providing recreational and alternative transportation opportunities for areas with less trail access. The success of this project will enhance the usage of the historic railbed of the Athens Branch Georgia Railroad, known as the first State-chartered rail line in Georgia opened in 1841.

#### **University of Georgia Marine Institute - UGAMI Water Garden Floor Bridge Replacement**

The UGAMI Water Garden is located on property owned by the State of Georgia and leased to UGAMI. The six-acre water garden, also known as the alligator pond, is adjacent to the main campus of UGAMI and the historic Reynolds Mansion. The garden was originally installed in 1923 by Howard Coffin and was designed with numerous islands to represent the world's continents: each "continent" was originally planted with native specimens. The project consists of installing two aluminum free-span bridges to serve as walkways connecting a floating dock, to improve ADA accessibility to the trails.

#### **USDA Forest Service - Blue Ridge RD - Motorized Trail Rehabilitation**

The Blue Ridge Ranger District manages 30.5 miles of motorized recreation opportunities across 300,000 acres including two OHV trails systems in Union County: Davenport OHV and Beasley Knob OHV and one OHV Trail System in Lumpkin County: Whissenhunt OHV. The trail systems support a variety of forms of motorized recreation that includes dirt bikes, ATVs, side-by-sides, UTVs, Dual-Sports, and Full-size vehicles. The project consists of completing the next phase in the management plan on three OHV trail systems, which involves 30.5 miles of heavy maintenance and rerouting of 1.2 miles of trail at Whissenhunt OHV.

**Walker County - Walker Rocks Trail Remediation**

The Walker County project consists of renovating the existing public access pedestrian trail by replacing the temporary gravel surface with a permanent surface and adding trail amenities. Renovating the trail will eliminate washouts that regularly close the trail to visitors until the necessary repairs are completed. The project will enhance access to outdoor recreation by providing trail users with an improved outdoor experience in a safe environment.