

**PROFILES OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONORS
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ALL PROFILES WRITTEN BY FRANK MCINTOSH

GEORGE JETER

Land owning in the Jeter family goes back just a little ways. The family first arrived at Port Royal, Va. before 1700. The generations in between have been landowners, as Jeter says, “leapfrogging from one frontier to the next.”

When Columbus, Ga. was founded in the 1830s, the Jeters had already arrived in the area. George’s family leap-frogged over to Enterprise, Ala., which features a Boll Weevil monument, erected in honor of the pest that hastened the local economy’s transition from cotton to much more profitable peanuts.

Jeter grew up an avid hunter and says the appeal of land to him goes back to the days when he’d grab his single shot .410 or .22 and take his bike up the road and go hunting. Although he no longer hunts, saying he “takes no great pleasure in killing,” he still loves the woods and the animals. His greatest pleasure in owning the land he says is having “free range” to roam the land and notes that it is ever more difficult to have that access to land without owning some.

Jeter, who worked as CFO for AFLAC, says, “I’ve been retired since 1985, but I still pretty much work full-time” as a consultant to the company and various charitable organizations.



George Jeter with grandchildren Stewart and Brantley

Before AFLAC, Jeter worked as an IRS agent, eventually in charge of all operations north of Atlanta. “I think my pleasing personality came from those days,” Jeter says.

Being active with various charitable organizations, Jeter notes Columbus has “per capita probably the highest percentage of charities anywhere. I’ve always thought that people who’ve been fortunate should share.” One volunteer project Jeter helped bring to fruition was a 50-year lease of Department of Defense land on West Point Lake for use as a Boy Scout camp. “I had to get the Secretary of Army to sign it. He was the only person who could sign a lease that long.”



Jeter's son Jim, an engineer at Warner Robins AFB, lives in Bonaire and with the help of some neighbors looks after the property. Daughter Leslie, a nurse anesthetist who lives in Atlanta, is more of a city girl. Property maintenance has been a bit more of a chore during this year's cold, wet winter. Significant portions of the property have stayed underwater for a while, in part because every let up in the rain seemingly triggers another release from the Lake Jackson reservoir upstream on the Ocmulgee.

Cabin on property in the snow storm of winter 2009

Son Jim is a hunter, and manages the property in accordance with QDMA principles. Ample food plots are in place on the property, although Jeter notes, "We may have to start over after the floods this year." George's home off Lake Oliver near Columbus has been covered up with deer this winter, possibly driven from their normal foraging range. "They've eaten things that you didn't know a deer would eat."

A goodly portion of the easement property was logged prior to Jeter's purchase of the property, and he intends to try to restore longleaf pine to some of the upland areas. The balance of the property is used for hunting and to provide habitat. Among the animals that find habitat on the property are a pair of nesting eagles ("I worry about my Shih Tzu when we're up there,") a den of coyotes ("you should hear 'em when the train comes through,") black bears, bobcats and "ducks by the thousands." Jim noted with the property's periodic flooding you could almost hunt deer and duck from the same spot at different points in the year.

There is also a beaver pond near the lodge on the property. The pond stays wet even in the driest weather as the area's topography area feeds water down off surrounding hills toward the pond. There is also a strong artesian well. A well bored to serve the lodge produces around 2,000 gallons an hour, flowing so freely that it needed to be capped.

Jeter pointed out that one nice piece of land management on the property was the use of hardened stream crossings rather than culverts and more engineered solutions. "You can't fight water," Jeter says, "but the crossings are there, even when they're submerged. You just have to have faith and plunge in."

Asked what is his least favorite aspect of owning land is, Jeter replies, "You don't own land; it owns you." Of course, his family's known that for a few hundred years.