



NEWS RELEASE

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CONSERVATION EASEMENT SECURED TO FURTHER PROTECT GEORGIA'S BIODIVERSITY

RUTLEDGE, GA (March 15, 2023) — The Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, Inc. (GALT) announced the successful completion of a conservation easement on a 33-acre property in Georgia's piedmont region to protect the land from development and preserve its natural beauty and ecological diversity.

This biologically diverse property, located in Morgan County, lies adjacent to two other properties also forever protected through conservation easements held by GALT. Together, these three properties make up a larger, contiguous tract owned by the Jenkins family. The land trust worked closely with the family to secure these conservation easements, which will be held and enforced in perpetuity, forever protecting the ecological integrity of this land.

The most recent phase of this project furthers the goals outlined in the Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan (GSWAP) and Morgan County's Comprehensive Plan by preserving open space, including farmland and forest land, and protecting significant habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants. The landscape features bottomland hardwood forest, mesic hardwood forest, and a stream, all of which are GSWAP-identified High Priority Habitats.

On the property, the White-throated sparrow, Song sparrow, Eastern towhee, Red-bellied woodpecker, Fox squirrel, Common Water snake, and Spiny Orb Weaver are just a few examples of the native fauna observed. The presence of so many species further indicates that the property supports numerous other terrestrial and aquatic rare species. The property also features suitable habitat for high priority migratory and resident birds and amphibians. Thus, protection of the property, including a Preservation Area affording even higher protection for high priority habitat, benefits numerous species of plants and wildlife that are otherwise facing habitat loss.

Mike Heneghan, Director of Stewardship for GALT said, "The Jenkins family have been excellent partners in conserving historic farmland in Morgan County, and we are very excited to protect this 33-acre tract. Through this project and the family's previous donations, we have been able to permanently conserve over 100 contiguous acres of agricultural land and high priority hardwood forests along Rawlings Branch."

This conservation easement is part of a larger effort by GALT to protect natural areas throughout the southeast. Since its founding in 1993, GALT has helped to protect more than 448,000 acres of land throughout Georgia and Alabama through conservation easements, land acquisitions, and other conservation initiatives, making it the largest regional land trust in the Southeast.

For more information about the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust and its conservation efforts, visit www.galandtrust.org.