

NATURE

GEORGIA

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Chattahoochee Fall Line dam removal © H. Jacobs



Deron Davis © Eliot VanOtteren

Dear Friends,

Put plainly, this has been a challenging year of trauma and grief. As you have weathered the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the tumult resulting from a nation struggling to overcome the stains of racism and inequality, so has The Nature Conservancy. Since last spring, I have more than once found myself awed by the resilience of the human spirit as I have watched colleagues, friends and complete strangers support each other and seek pathways forward that are fair and right. And, I have witnessed the transformative impact of nature on the human spirit during the worst of times.

The world needs nature. With your support, TNC continues to make progress toward a world where nature thrives, and where all people have the access and the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the natural world that sustains us. Though the way we accomplish our conservation goals will change as a result of limited staff

capacity and the widespread impact of the economic downturn, we are clear-eyed and excited to continue building on all that we have accomplished in Georgia.

In July, the Georgia board of trustees approved the conservation priorities and accompanying strategies that will guide our work over the next three years. The core of our work—protecting land and water—will continue, and we will accelerate our efforts to help Georgia achieve a clean energy future. We will actively and transparently work to ensure that all people have safe access to nature and all its benefits, regardless of their race or economic status, and we will work together to protect natural resources and communities. It's my pleasure to share topline insights into our 2021–2023 strategic plan.



Land

From the Southern Blue Ridge to Atlanta and from the Chattahoochee Fall Line to the coast, we will work with partners to **purchase and protect** resilient sites and corridors that represent Georgia's diverse ecosystems and that allow a diversity of plant and animal species to adapt to climate change.

We will continue to use science-based **land management** practices, including the application of prescribed fire and planting of native species, to maintain and restore critical habitat.

We will responsibly **restore and steward** critical habitat by planting native vegetation and applying ecologically sound prescribed fire, on TNC preserves and on lands owned by partners. We will leverage TNC preserves as demonstration sites for rare species management, prescribed fire, and longleaf pine restoration.

We will ensure a robust and resilient ecosystem on the Chattahoochee Fall Line by protecting up to 10,000 additional acres around Fort Benning and working with partners to preserve, protect and connect the longleaf pine ecosystem in the Upper Coosa and Coosa River basin.



Freshwater

We will continue to restore aquatic habitat and improve passage for fish, mussels and other aquatic organisms by removing obsolete dams and culverts and reintroducing native mussel species.

We will **conserve and restore critical freshwater habitats** in several high-priority watersheds: Upper Etowah, Raccoon Creek, Conasauga River, Holly Creek, Tallapoosa River, Savannah River below Thurmond Dam, Lower Altamaha River, Lower Flint River, and Lower Satilla River.

Working with partners and farmers, we will **protect soil health** and native species in the Conasauga River and its tributaries by minimizing contaminated runoff from agricultural areas containing sediment, herbicide residuals and hormones.



Oceans

We will conserve Georgia's salt marshes, floodplains, wetlands and maritime forests to ensure that they can **withstand the impacts of climate change** and continue to support diverse species populations.

We will help Georgia maintain economically viable **oyster and snapper-grouper fisheries** by working with commercial and recreational fishers to reduce species mortality, improve species data collection, and protect hard bottom habitat.



Climate Change

We will bring a **solutions-oriented approach** to clean energy and climate change. We will protect natural areas that store carbon, provide freshwater and blunt the impact of storms. We will help transform how working lands are managed, how energy is generated and used, and how communities plan for and respond to climate impacts. We also will seek to bridge the partisan divide and build durable support for climate action.



Healthy Cities

TNC will contribute to increased public greenspace and protect mature forest in metro Atlanta by acquiring and protecting land within the South River watershed and leading a coalition of community members and nonprofit organizations to generate public support for the South River Forest concept, a **3,500-acre public greenspace**.

As you can see, we have big goals. Our dispersed team across the state—working in conservation, development, finance and operations, government relations and marketing—is moving forward with strong plans, finding creative solutions to undeniable challenges, and working across boundaries and beyond barriers with partners, stakeholders and supporters. I confidently speak for everyone in saying we look forward to working with you, our friends and supporters, as we work toward a future where people and nature thrive.

Sincerely,

*Deron Davis, Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy in Georgia*

Strengthen Our Organization

Meeting these conservation goals and overcoming known and unknown obstacles will require TNC to work even smarter. The departments that enable our on-the-ground conservation work will function in alignment to strengthen TNC's finances, support our policy positions, and connect more people to nature and to TNC.