

GFC Works with Landowners

The GFC is dedicated to assisting private landowners with technical advice in forest management and by holding conservation easements that support working forests. The GFC has a vision of healthy, sustainable forests providing clean air, clean water, and abundant products for future generations. Our mission is to provide leadership, service, and education in the protection and stewardship of Georgia's forest resources.



P. O. Box 819
Macon, GA 31202
1-800-GA-TREES
gatrees.org

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider



Georgia's Forest Legacy Program



What Is The Forest Legacy Program?



Tarva Plantation (4,968 acres) is a donated conservation easement received in 2005.

The Forest Legacy Program protects environmentally important working forests threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The program allows for the donation and/or purchase of conservation easements or fee simple land from willing participants who wish to keep the land in forestry use. Landowners may continue to own their land or sell it to someone who wants undeveloped forestland. The State holds title to the Forest Legacy conservation easements and provides technical advice to landowners. Landowners who donate a conservation easement are eligible for certain Federal and State income tax credits. Priority is given to lands that can be effectively protected and managed. Georgia has identified areas that have multiple public benefits such as water quality protection, key wildlife habitat, and outstanding recreation opportunities or scenic views, while providing the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses such as timber harvesting and wildlife management. Landowners continue to own and use their property at their discretion. Public access is not required, but can be allowed if the landowner chooses. A written forest management plan is developed by the GFC to address the landowner's specific goals.

Why Do We Need Forest Legacy?

Intact forestlands supply timber products, wildlife habitat, soil and watershed protection, aesthetics, and recreational opportunities. However, as these areas are fragmented and disappear, so do the irreplaceable benefits they provide.

The Forest Legacy Program encourages the voluntary protection of privately



Sand Ridge in Long County, Georgia

What Makes a Working Forest Conservation Easement Different?

owned forestland through the purchase of conservation easements and fee title purchase on a “willing seller, willing buyer” basis.

Traditional conservation easements, sometimes called “open space,” “no build,” or “scenic” easements, remove landowners’ rights to engage in certain activities, such as mining, subdivision, and residential and commercial development. These easements may not mention forestry at all, or may simply allow timber harvesting according to “good practices” with no additional detail. Working Forest Conservation Easements (WFCEs) do more than take away specified development rights from a property. A WFCE adds language that guides forest management in order to protect specified forest values.

WFCEs can protect property-specific forest values by prohibiting damaging forest practices and encouraging management practices that promote a desired forest type.

Who Administers the Program?

WFCEs can also protect landscape values by encouraging management of a forest in relation to its surroundings. Further, WFCEs can address broader societal goals, such as sustaining a forest economy and the regional community that depends upon it, by protecting the productive forest base. WFCEs can enable landowners to continue to derive economic value from the land to support the ongoing costs of ownership and stewardship.

The Georgia Forestry Commission administers the Forest Legacy Program through a grant from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry branch. For the purchase of easements or land, grants are awarded on a competitive basis and are based on a national priority ranking of projects.

How Can a Landowner Participate?

Any interested landowner can contact their local Georgia Forestry Commission office to obtain further information or visit the GFC website at gatrees.org.



Turtle Shoals Plantation donated a 687.5 acre easement along the Flint River.