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State Approves Grant for Carroll County to Expand McIntosh Reserve

Funding supports Chattahoochee RiverLands vision, adds greenspace at southern terminus

ATLANTA (May 24, 2023) – The State of Georgia has approved a \$1.95 million grant for Carroll County to assist in acquiring 429 acres of undeveloped land and almost double the size of the adjacent McIntosh Reserve.

McIntosh Reserve is a 527-acre park located in Carroll County along the Chattahoochee River, and diagonal from Chattahoochee Bend State Park in Coweta County. By linking McIntosh Reserve to Chattahoochee Bend State Park, the acquisition will create a contiguous 3,000-acre greenspace at the southern terminus of the Chattahoochee RiverLands, a proposed 100-mile linear park through the heart of one of America's largest metro regions.

"We are extremely grateful to have this grant approved and for our strong collaboration with Carroll County," said George Dusenbury, Georgia State Director at Trust for Public Land. "This is just the most recent investment that the state has made in the Chattahoochee RiverLands, support that already amounted to more than \$10 million. Chattahoochee RiverLands will be metro Atlanta's defining public space, stretching across 19 cities and seven counties. This network of parks and trails will bring people to the water's edge and spark a lifelong love of the river."

Trust for Public Land, in collaboration with more than 80 organizations in metro Atlanta, has laid the groundwork for the expansive Chattahoochee RiverLands project. McIntosh Reserve has been identified as the last take-out point for the 48-mile RiverLands Camp+Paddle Trail, which will extend south from Atlanta once complete.

The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and the state Department of Natural Resources approved the grant in January. It was then voted on by the Senate and House Appropriation Committees.

"This year's projects selected to move forward into the second phase of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program review will build on the program's successes," said Commissioner of Natural Resources Mark Williams. "I am thrilled to see so many of our partners working together on this important project and its larger goal. I look forward to seeing its impact on river access, the protection of critical habitats for protected species, and preserving historic Muscogee Creek lands."

Carroll County will provide an additional \$300K from its most recent SPLOST referendum, a portion of which was dedicated to park facilities and greenspace acquisition.

“In addition to critical river access, McIntosh Reserve provides opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, fishing, and wildlife viewing,” said Michelle Morgan, Chair, Carroll County Board of Commissioners. “This project will also provide much-needed public road access along state route GA-5 in our county.”

Carroll County resident Laura Richards, a national member of the Trust for Public Land Board and a past member of McIntosh’s Friends of the Reserve, also provided funding to make the McIntosh Reserve expansion a reality.

“I know first-hand how important it is to provide ways for people to get outside and experience the outdoors,” Richards said. “I fully support the vision for the Chattahoochee RiverLands, and I’m ecstatic that part of that will now be realized here in Carroll County.”

McIntosh Reserve already has a boat ramp, and current plans include building a comfort station and environmental remediation. The acquisition area will protect about 2,000 feet of riverfront and riparian lands along a portion of the Chattahoochee River and about 8,000 feet of streambank and riparian lands along a portion of Acorn Creek, a tributary to the Chattahoochee River. Many species are either partially or completely dependent upon a functioning river and riparian corridor in order to survive. This critical habitat is associated with nineteen rare, high-priority plant and animal species, three of which are state protected species: the bluestripe shiner, highscale shiner, and the bald eagle.

The Trust for Public Land also aims to preserve the longstanding human history associated with this site, including notable homelands of the Lower Creek/Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe.

About Trust for Public Land

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 4 million acres of public land, created more than 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors. To learn more, visit tpl.org.