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**ATLANTA AUDUBON AWARDS HABITAT RESTORATION FUND GRANT TO CANDLER PARK**

**(Atlanta, Ga.) March 5, 2019** – Atlanta Audubon has awarded a **Habitat Restoration Fund Grant** to **Candler Park Conservancy** for a habitat restoration project in the City of Atlanta’s **Candler Park**, located at 1500 McLendon Avenue. This grant from Atlanta Audubon, made possible through the generosity of a private donor, will support work to restore a bird-friendly wetland habitat along the riparian corridor in the north-central portion of the park.

Candler Park encompasses 55-acres of historic green space, including a public golf course and a range of other recreational amenities, situated on the eastern side of Atlanta at the confluence of Freedom Park and Olmsted Linear Park. The park was donated to the City of Atlanta in 1922 by Coca-Cola magnate Asa Candler. Candler Park Conservancy was formed in 2015 to protect and improve Candler Park.

Since a successful stream restoration project in 2006-2007, Candler Park’s riparian corridor has evolved into a thriving urban wetland ecosystem hosting a range of native flora, birds, and other wildlife.

According to eBird, a real-time, online checklist program, 95 different bird species have been recently spotted in Candler Park. However, the park’s riparian corridor is currently overgrown throughout its quarter-mile length with invasive and exotic plant species like porcelain berry, privet, and Japanese Chaff Flower.

Through the habitat restoration grant, Atlanta Audubon will fund the professional removal of these invasive and exotic plants, and installation of bird-friendly, site-appropriate, native plants. This work will be performed in cooperation with Candler Park Conservancy, the City of Atlanta, and other stakeholders. Atlanta Audubon and Candler Park Conservancy may also explore other opportunities enabled by the habitat restoration project like bird species abundance monitoring, community outreach programs, and Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Certification.

“Atlanta Audubon is eager to work with Candler Park Conservancy to restore Candler Park’s riparian corridor and to replace invasive plants with native plants that benefit birds and other wildlife,” says Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Executive Director. “This project demonstrates how parks can be urban refuges for wildlife while still serving multiple recreational uses for people.”

“We are so grateful for this generous grant to improve Candler Park,” says Perry Smith, a Candler Park Conservancy board member involved in the project. “Candler Park offers a great range of recreational uses, but it also serves complementary roles as a locally significant green space, watershed, and natural habitat. The park’s riparian corridor in particular has become an important urban habitat for birds and other species. We are excited to work with Atlanta Audubon and other stakeholders to make this part of the park more resilient, sustainable, and ecologically sound.”

The Habitat Restoration Fund is a new grant program of Atlanta Audubon sponsored by a private donor. Henderson Park, in Tucker, also received a 2019 grant, and there will be additional grant opportunities for 2020. To learn more about applying for the Atlanta Audubon Habitat Restoration Fund Grant, visit [www.atlantaaudubon.org/habitat-restoration-fund](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/habitat-restoration-fund).

*Atlanta Audubon Society is building places where birds and people thrive. We create birds -friendly communities through conservation, education, and advocacy.*

**Media Note:** Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.

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