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ATLANTA AUDUBON AWARDS HABITAT RESTORATION GRANT TO HENDERSON PARK IN DEKALB COUNTY

(Atlanta, Ga.) January 14, 2019 – Atlanta Audubon has awarded **Habitat Restoration Grant** to implement bird-friendly habitat improvements to the **Native Plant and Wildlife Walk** at **Henderson Park**, located at 2723 Henderson Road, in Tucker. The **DeKalb County Master Gardeners**, a volunteer group that manages trail maintenance in the park, submitted the grant application. The **Habitat Restoration Grant** is being funded through the generosity of a private donor.

As part of the grant, Atlanta Audubon is working with Henderson Park and DeKalb County Master Gardeners to provide the following services that will benefit both park users and the birds and other wildlife that rely on this park for habitat:

- Professional invasive, exotic plant removal;
- Bird-friendly, native plant installation;
- Birds species abundance monitoring;
- Seasonal on-site bird banding;
- Volunteer work days and citizen science monitoring;
- Community outreach programs at project site and nearby facilities as appropriate; and
- Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Certification.

“I have been a DeKalb Master Gardener for more than 15 years and recently retired from Fernbank Science Center,” says Trecia Neal, a DeKalb County Master who submitted the grant application and is collaborating with Atlanta Audubon staff on the work in Henderson Park. “I was thrilled to come to Henderson Park and find such a high quality forest right here in my own back yard. The forest is handicap accessible with paved trails, and has plenty of great parking.”

Henderson Park is a 103-acre park that includes soccer fields, a playground, Lake Erin, and walking trails. The improvement project will take place along the **Native Plant and Wildlife Walk**, a paved path meandering through a corner of the park. The project goal is to restore a natural Georgia Piedmont habitat to provide sanctuary for birds and other wildlife and offer educational opportunities for the community, including bird walks and seminars for adults and youth.

The project will include large-scale removal of invasive, non-native plants, such as Chinese privet and Japanese wisteria. In their place, Atlanta Audubon will install bird-friendly native trees and shrubs that provide fruit, seeds, and nectar for birds and other wildlife. In addition, Henderson Park plans to install educational kiosks and signs along the trail, and they will also add a water feature, bird feeders, and bird houses. The restored habitat along the trail will serve as an outdoor education center for bird walks, bird banding demonstrations, seminars for the community, and outdoor education classes for children.

“Atlanta Audubon is delighted to award this Habitat Restoration Grant to Henderson Park to help offset land that is being lost to development and urban sprawl,” says Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Executive Director. “After the project is completed, the Native Plant and Wildlife Walk will be certified as an Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary and will not only benefit birds and other wildlife who rely on these areas but also serve as a demonstration area so the public can learn how incorporating native plants into the landscape can benefit birds and wildlife.”

The Habitat Restoration Fund is a new grant program of Atlanta Audubon sponsored by a private donor. Henderson Park is the first grant recipient, but there will be others in the future. To learn more about applying for the Atlanta Audubon Habitat Restoration Fund, visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/habitat-restoration-fund.

Atlanta Audubon Society is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-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/y3I9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.

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