



GEORGIA AUDUBON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Note: Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://bit.ly/33mdYok>.

GEORGIA AUDUBON AND TOWN CENTER COMMUNITY ALLIANCE CONSTRUCT CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWER AT NOONDAY CREEK

(Atlanta, Ga.) September 8, 2020—Georgia Audubon and the Town Center Community Alliance, non-profit partner of the Town Center Community Improvement District (CID), recently partnered on a project to install a 12-foot-tall Chimney Swift tower along the Noonday Creek Trail in Kennesaw. Designed to mimic an actual chimney, the tower will serve as roosting and nesting habitat for these Chimney Swifts. The beautiful artwork on the tower was painted by the Atlanta-based muralist, Christina Ward. In addition to the tower, the site will include educational signage that highlights the value of the swifts and constructed towers.

Still a fairly common sight in the metro area, Chimney Swifts are being forced to respond to additional threats across their range—from chimney capping, to tree removal, to a decreasing supply of insects due to pesticides, pollution, and climate change. Other issues, such as building collisions and challenges on swifts' wintering grounds are exacerbating population declines. This is the fifth tower Georgia Audubon has constructed in the last couple of years with three more in the works for the coming months.

“The Chimney Swift is one of Georgia Audubon’s current focal species, and we have been working with various organizations across the metro area to create habitat for this aerial insectivore,” says Adam Betuel, director of conservation for Georgia Audubon. “We were delighted to partner with Town Center to build this 12-foot tower, which we hope will not only provide nesting and roosting habitat for swifts, but also educate the many people who walk along the Noonday Creek trail about the importance of supporting these birds. The Noonday Creek Trail has long been a location for free Georgia Audubon field trips.”

Chimney Swifts have specially adapted feet that allow them to cling to the inside of hollow structures, like these towers. The swifts build saucer-shaped nests made out of twigs glued together with the birds' saliva. Chimney Swifts rarely allow other birds (including other swifts) to use "their" tower while they are nesting, but in late summer, hundreds or even thousands of individual birds may roost in one large chimney creating a spectacular site overhead as they flock into the chimney near dusk. In exchange for the roosting site, Chimney Swifts will provide natural pest control as each swift may consume up to 1,000 flying insects, including mosquitos, each day!

"Enhancing our greenspace is one of the pillars of our mission and this tower will do just that," adds Director of the Alliance Jennifer Hogan. "We are looking forward to observe this remarkable site as the birds begin to call this installment 'home.' The Alliance and the Town Center CID both have a foundation of partnerships achieving impactful projects such as this, so we are grateful to be able to collaborate with Georgia Audubon to complete this tower."

Since the 1950s, Chimney Swifts and other aerial insectivores have experienced drastic population declines due to several factors, such as the increased use of pesticides that harms their main prey, flying insects, and the loss of swifts' nesting and roosting habitat (formerly hollow trees and more recently, man-made chimneys). Chimney Swifts, now listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, have responded to these challenges by increasingly flocking to urban areas that offer abandoned factory smokestacks or historical home chimneys that have been left uncapped and which mimic their natural breeding and roosting sites.

About Georgia Audubon: *Georgia Audubon is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and community engagement.*

About the Town Center Community Alliance: *Established by the Town Center CID in 2015, the Town Center Community Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to shaping the future of Town Center by supporting and funding beautification, greenspace and other quality of life initiatives that help foster a sense of place within the district. The Alliance seeks to preserve and enhance the area's natural beauty while creating opportunities for outdoor recreation by developing parks, trails, landscapes, artwork displays and other quality of life initiatives.*

About Town Center Community Improvement District: *Founded in 1997, the Town CID is dedicated to the betterment of the Town Center area through transportation infrastructure, safety improvements, beautification and other projects that enhance property value by increasing interest and investment in the community. The Town Center CID utilizes funds from voluntary commercial real estate taxes to implement its projects. For more information, please visit www.towncentercid.com.*

About the Artist, Christian Ward: *Christina Ward is an Atlanta mural artist and international conservationist, whose bright and engaging works capture the uniqueness and preciousness of the*

world's creatures. Using her art as a form of activism, Christina hopes to inspire people to look deeper into the subject and commit to participating in conservation initiatives. For more on her work, or commission inquiries, please visit www.Xtinapaints.com and www.Savethegiants.org.

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