



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 RECEIVES THREE GRANTS FOR CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION WORK

(ATLANTA, GA.) April 15, 2021 - Georgia Audubon has been awarded three grants totaling \$35,000, two from the Georgia Ornithological Society and one from KEEN, Inc, to fund habitat restoration, native plant public awareness, and STEM-based outdoor exploration for youth.

Established by the Georgia Ornithological Society (GOS) to benefit seasonal and migratory bird habitat, the **Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant** will fund bird-friendly habitat restoration along the South River. Georgia Audubon will remove invasive plant species, such as Chinese privet and Japanese hop that currently crowds the riverbank across the 15-acre project site and replace them with appropriate native plants, specifically giant cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*). Five acres of our project site were previously treated in 2016 by the South River Watershed Alliance, but are now in need of follow-up treatment. The remaining 10 acres have had limited to no restoration efforts and are heavily infested with invasive plant species.

The 15-acre project site is bordered by the Power of Flight grassland (work funded by GOS and managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources). This specific site is well known for its avian diversity and the broader region is full of wildlife diversity and includes well-known spots like Arabia Mountain, Panola Mountain State Park, Lyons Farm, and the Pole Bridge Wastewater Facility.

Restoring a healthy river buffer habitat, with a focus on rivercane, to the South River corridor will further establish critical bird and wildlife habitat. Further restoring the habitat along the South River will enhance the work that has already been done to support a range of species and guilds, including grassland specialists, migratory warblers, river-dependent species, and select focal species like the Swainson's Warbler.

"The Georgia Ornithological Society (GOS) is proud to support the 2021 conservation efforts of Georgia Audubon with a Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant," says Jim Ferrari, a GOS Board member who chairs the Conservation Grant Committee and is a professor at Wesleyan College in Macon. "Georgia Audubon's proposal to remove invasive plant species along the South River floodplain and replace them with native river cane will improve habitat for resident and migratory birds and other wildlife. Not only that,

but restoration of the canebrake ecosystem will have benefits for water quality as well, helping to filter runoff and control streamside erosion.”

A second **GOS Opportunity Grant**, with additional funding received from the Cherokee Garden Club in 2020, will fund a native plant demonstration garden along the Atlanta BeltLine. The garden will be installed in partnership with Trees Atlanta at the site of a newly-constructed Chimney Swift tower (funded by a grant from Patagonia Atlanta) on the Eastside Trail section of the Atlanta BeltLine, an area near Ponce City Market where more than 1.7 million residents and visitors utilize the corridor annually.

Approximately 650 native plants will be planted in a 1,500-square-foot area, ranging from native grass and perennial plugs to larger three-gallon shrubs. The exact mix of plant species will be determined based on availability at the time of planting, but examples include Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*), Black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), and Adam’s needle (*Yucca filamentosa*).

Finally, KEEN Inc. recently awarded one of its **KEEN Effect Kids Grants** to Georgia Audubon, one of nine organizations selected from an applicant pool of more than 400. This grant will be used to fund Georgia Audubon’s Atlanta Urban Ecologists, a program that guides teens through an 8-month exploration of the fascinating, rich ecology of metro Atlanta, providing opportunities for hands-on field experiences, conservation, and community science, while also establishing a network of environmental professionals who can assist with their academic and career development.

For more information on these and other Georgia Audubon conservation and education programs, please visit www.GeorgiaAudubon.org.

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

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